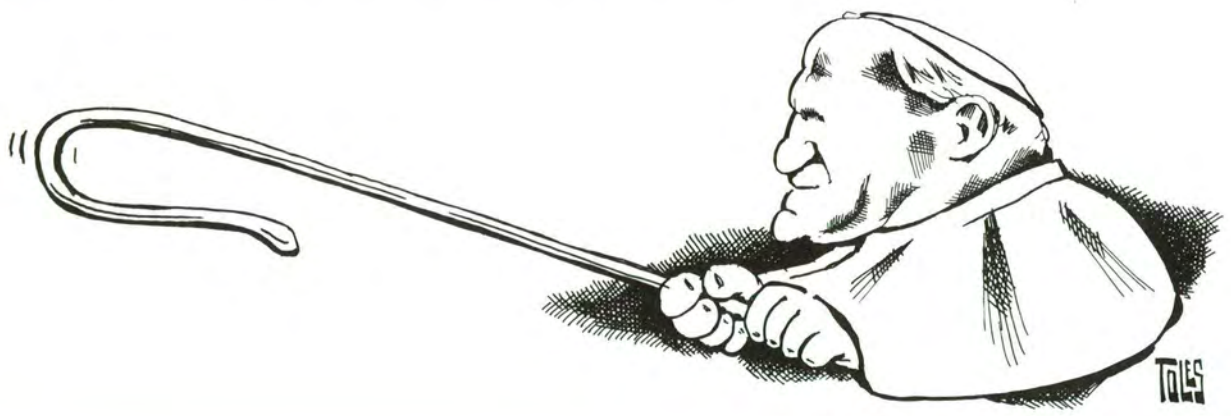
Free Inquiry

Winter 1987/88 Vol. 8, No. 1 $3.75

Voices of Dissent within the Catholic Church

Daniel Maguire
Robert Francoeur
Ernest Fortin
Francis Winters



Breaking with the Old Humanism

Paul Kurtz *Harry Stopes-Roe* *Beverly Earles* *Levi Fragell*

Secular Humanism in American Political Culture

Adolf Grünbaum

Psychic Astronomy *Martin Gardner*

Also:

Robert Ingersoll's House, the Weeping Mona Lisa, Don Page on Canadian Secularism, Nicholas Capaldi on Sidney Hook, and much more . . .

WINTER 1987/88, VOL. 8, NO. 1 **Free Inquiry** ISSN 0272-0701

Contents

3 **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** 16 **ON THE BARRICADES** 58 **IN THE NAME OF GOD**

5 **EDITORIALS**
Breaking with the Old Humanism . . . Eupraxophy, *Paul Kurtz* / Catholicism and Change, *Robert Basil* / The Western New York Connection, *Eds.*

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR HUMANIST ORGANIZATIONS

7 Humanism as a Life Stance ..... *Harry Stopes-Roe*
9 The Humanist Identity ..... *Levi Fragell*
10 Nincompoopery and Nothingarianism ..... *Beverly M. Earles*

12 FREE INQUIRY's Conference in Washington ..... *Robert Basil*
18 The House of Ingersoll
19 Shawn and Madonna
20 Re-broadcasting the True Pat Robertson ..... *Edmund D. Cohen*

A SPECIAL STATEMENT

21 Secular Humanism in American Political Culture ..... *Adolf Grünbaum*
23 God and the Holocaust ..... *Adolf Grünbaum*

26 Psychic Astronomy ..... *Martin Gardner*

VOICES OF DISSENT WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

34 The Bishops and the Ambivalent Bomb ..... *Francis X. Winters*
36 Making Ends Meet ..... *Ernest L. Fortin*
40 Humanism, Religion, and Authority ..... *Daniel C. Maguire*
43 The Vatican and the Catholic Couple ..... *Robert T. Francouer*

BELIEF AND UNBELIEF AROUND THE WORLD

47 From Religious Belief to Secularism in Canada ..... *Don Page*

BOOKS

51 One Step Ahead ..... *Nicholas Capaldi*

VIEWPOINTS

53 Elections, Base Hits, and Tornadoes ..... *Frank Reuter*
54 John Dewey: Educator and Innovator ..... *Tim Madigan*
55 Our Transitional Species ..... *Betty McCollister*

Editor: **Paul Kurtz**
Senior Editors: **Vern Bullough, Gerald Larue**
Associate Editors: **Doris Doyle, Steven L. Mitchell, Lee Nisbet, Gordon Stein**
Managing Editor: **Andrea Szalanski**
Executive Editor: **Robert Basil**
Assistant Editor: **Tim Madigan**

Contributing Editors:

Robert S. Alley, professor of humanities, University of Richmond; **Paul Beattie,** Unitarian Church, Pittsburgh; **Jo-Ann Boydston,** director, Dewey Center; **Paul Edwards,** professor of philosophy, Brooklyn College; **Albert Ellis,** director, Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy; **Roy P. Fairfield,** social scientist, Union Graduate School; **Joseph Fletcher,** theologian, University of Virginia Medical School; **Antony Flew,** philosopher, Reading University, England; **R. Joseph Hoffmann,** chairman, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Hartwick College, Oneonta, N.Y.; **Sidney Hook,** professor emeritus of philosophy, NYU; **Marvin Kohl,** philosopher, State University of New York College at Fredonia; **Jean Kotkin,** executive director, American Ethical Union; **Ronald A. Lindsay,** attorney, Washington, D.C.; **Delos B. McKown,** professor of philosophy, Auburn University; **Howard Radest,** director, Ethical Culture Schools; **Robert Rimmer,** author; **Svetozar Stojanovic,** professor of philosophy, University of Belgrade; **Thomas Szasz,** psychiatrist, Upstate Medical Center, Syracuse; **V. M. Tarkunde,** Supreme Court Judge, India; **Richard Taylor,** professor of philosophy, Union College; **Sherwin Wine,** North American Committee for Humanism

Editorial Associates: **Jim Christopher, Fred Condo Jr., Thomas Flynn, Thomas Franczyk, James Martin-Diaz**

Executive Director of CODESH, Inc.: **Jean Millholland**

Systems Manager: **Richard Seymour** *Typesetting:* **Paul E. Loynes** *Art Director:* **Alain Kugel** *Audio Technician:* **Vance Vigrass**

Staff: **Steven Karr, Jacqueline Livingston, Valerie Marvin, Anthony Nigro, Alfreda Pidgeon**

FREE INQUIRY (ISSN 0272-0701) is published quarterly by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH, Inc.), a nonprofit corporation, 3159 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215. Phone (716) 834-2921.

Copyright ©1988 by CODESH, Inc.

Second-class postage paid at Buffalo, New York, and at additional mailing offices. National distribution by International Periodicals Distributors, San Diego, California.

Subscription rates: $20.00 for one year, $35.00 for two years, $48.00 for three years, $3.75 for single copies. Address subscription orders, changes of address, and advertising to: FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005.

Manuscripts, letters, and editorial inquiries should be addressed to: The Editor, FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005. All manuscripts should be accompanied by two additional copies and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or publisher.

Postmaster: Send address changes to FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Homnick's Holocaust

I wonder whether Rabbi Yaakov Homnick ("Hook Is Mired in Secular Confusion," FI, Fall 1987) tries to convince his congregation that the Holocaust is proof of God's justice.

David H. Brown
Sierra Vista, Ariz.

It was with a sense of disbelief and shock that I read Rabbi Homnick's letter. As a Jewish subscriber to FREE INQUIRY, I am chagrined that you would give him so much space. The only sentence in his diatribe that makes any sense is the one where he admits he is a whippersnapper and not in a position to snap a whip at so distinguished a gentleman as Sidney Hook. How true!

Inasmuch as your readership is probably mostly non-Jewish, I would like to make it clear that Yaakov Homnick does not, and cannot, represent the opinions of more than the tiniest fraction of Jewry. While perhaps a sizable fraction of Orthodox Jewry might accept some of the specious arguments that appear throughout his letter, the fraction that accepts his pronouncement that the Holocaust is an example of God's justice in the world must approach zero.

I can understand Hook's desire to put this upstart in his place, but citing the Holocaust as an example of God's justice is insane and should have precluded giving this upstart such a wide forum.

Morris Feller
Phoenix, Ariz.

Attempting to answer Sidney Hook's objections to Jewish faith, Rabbi Homnick adopts a typical theological ploy: Declare God inscrutable and unknowable when confronted with damaging evidence, but persist, despite the reputed inscrutability of God, to make any number of orthodox statements about the Deity. The claim of inscrutability, though appearing to be a theological assertion, actually amounts to a strategem for silencing heretical views while allowing orthodox notions to pass without question. One is not qualified to speak of God so long as one's statements do not conform to accepted faith.

Homnick begins by insisting "we cannot observe G-d." But then he proceeds to make a whole series of observations about Him—all of course immune to the charge that we cannot observe God, because that is not what the rabbi is actually contending, and because the observations he makes are conventional, pious, and orthodox whereas Sidney Hook's are not.

As a child, I, too, like little Sidney at twelve, thought what the rabbis taught me was either nonsense or morally repugnant truths. Once again a rabbi confirms my belief. About nonsense I have spoken. When it comes to moral vision, Homnick considers Hook's rejection of his heritage "a far greater tragedy than all the physically maimed children in the world." Is it any wonder why decent people abandon such faith?

Harry White
Chicago, Ill.

Masturbation and Rape

In the interview "Is the Sexual Revolution Over?" (FI, Fall 1987) Sol Gordon and Rob Tielman argue that the incidence of rape in the United States would be lessened if society and religion legitimized masturbation. I agree that if the stigma surrounding this harmless activity were removed fewer young people would engage in sexual intercourse before they were ready. They would have a socially sanctioned method for releasing sexual tension without trying to force another person into sex.

According to current feminist thinking, however, rape is not sexually motivated but is, rather, a crime of violence committed out of a need to exert power and control. While I don't doubt that there is some truth in that thinking, I suspect that to focus exclusively on the violence while ignoring the sex is to oversimplify the offense.

Jeff Robertson
Park Forest, Ill.

To Our Readers

With this issue, FREE INQUIRY enters its eighth year of publication. We are pleased to announce that our circulation continues to expand. The press run of our Fall issue topped 30,000 for the first time, and our total distribution approached 27,000; with an estimated 54,000 readers, we've hit a new record. We are profoundly grateful to you for helping FREE INQUIRY grow and for encouraging us to take the strong stands we have on behalf of the ideals of secular humanism.

Together, we have become the journal of record for humanism and free thought.

Testing Religious Morality

I would like to add to Tom Franczyk's article "Are Secular Humanists Evil?" (FI, Spring 1987). He points out that religious believers predominate in prisons in the United States—contrary to what one might expect if one assumes that religion is necessary for morals. Your readers may also be interested in knowing that the same situation exists in Great Britain. The Home Office is not too forthcoming on such matters, but, from what information is available, it is quite clear that prisoners almost unanimously call themselves Christians.

This seems to have been the case for some time. Between the wars British atheist Chapman Cohen sought permission to visit atheist prisoners in the same way that clergymen visited Christian inmates, only to be told that there were too few atheist convicts to justify granting such visiting rights!

Of all the main denominations in Britain, it is the Catholics who link morals with religion the most and who rely upon their own schools to achieve this end. It is therefore interesting to note that, while they presently constitute about 10 percent of the general population, they make up about a quarter of the prison population. Another curious fact: In 1973 the director of ROMA (Rehabilitation of Metropolitan Addicts) reported that at least half of London's drug addicts were Catholic. Of course, it is hard to resist pointing out that the most religious part of Great Britain—Northern Ireland—is also the most violent.

There may be other ways of testing the efficacy of religious morality. Catholics, fundamentalists, and Protestants are always raving on about sex education, contraception, and abortion; and in Great Britain we recently witnessed the spectacle of a Catholic mother of ten children going to the courts to argue against providing contraceptives to teenagers. But while the zealots rant, teachers educate and doctors quietly provide youngsters with counseling—and with contraceptives for those who won't stop being promiscuous. With good results: The teenage pregnancy rate has been going down steadily now for years. Meanwhile, over four thousand women (officially—the actual figure is

probably much higher) come to Britain every year from pious, Catholic Ireland to have abortions, this number being exceeded only by those from Spain. Is this how effective Christian morality is?

Steven Moreton
Edinburgh, Scotland

Down with Altruism

I was shocked. I read it again. Yes, it was there, but not as an object of discussion within the magazine. The back cover specifically stated that it was a principle and a value of humanism. It said (gasp): "We believe in the common moral decencies: altruism . . ."

It was even the first common moral decency listed! Massive amounts of well-earned respect for your publication escaped me.

Altruism is a word that was coined by the philosopher Auguste Comte. It has a very specific meaning: The ultimate virtue is self-sacrifice of the individual for the benefit of others. Comte and subsequent philosophers have made it clear that altruism means anti-ego and anti–self-determination.

Altruism is the basis of socialism. Mix it with duty and give it to the masses and you create a perfect environment for someone preaching sacrifice and duty. That someone may be an evangelist or a Hitler.

Altruism does not mean kindness, benevolence, or sympathy.

Is it possible that you have used the wrong word? Did you really mean kindness, benevolence, or sympathy? Do you support the abandonment of the self? Do you support the sacrifice of the individual?

I try to base my life on reason. It differentiates me from animals. It allows me to achieve and to progress. As a reasonable man, the most decadent and cannibalistic concept I have ever encountered is altruism.

Randy Paulsen
Litchfield Park, Ariz.

Xenoglossy and the Womb

The article "Xenoglossy and Glossolalia," by Don Laycock (FI, Summer 1987) contains a statement that I find incredible. It seems badly out of place in a supposedly scientific discussion:

> There was a well-documented case some years ago of a man who spoke excellent Russian, though there seemed no way he could have learned it. Investigation showed that his parents lived next door to a teacher of Russian, whose lessons were clearly audible to the baby in the cot next door. The language was thus acquired by natural means, but the circumstances had been totally forgotten by the speaker.

The author's confident statement that the language was acquired by "natural" means is mind-boggling. If there is any reliable evidence to support this surprising conclusion, I would very much like to see it.

If such a complex knowledge can be absorbed and retained by an infant auditing it from the cradle, this would lend credence to L. Ron Hubbard's contention that "engrams" are imbedded in the brain of a fetus by external, auditory impressions while in its mother's womb. I believe there is no scientific proof for this implausible theory. If I am in error, I would much appreciate corroborating references.

Frank W. Long
Albuquerque, N.M.

Frightening Assumptions

"Independent Christian schools do not expose students to [a] wide range of ideas. . . . Dissent is not tolerated. . . . No attempt is made to develop an appreciation of this nation's most cherished democratic principles . . . these schools do not develop in their students the skill of critical thinking . . ." ("Independent Christian Schools: A National Scandal," FI, Fall 1987). I applaud your efforts, as usual, to critique Christianity, and, specifically in this issue, Christian schools. If the claims of a system cannot withstand external scrutiny, it ought to be brought up short.

I personally struggle, however, with the generalization that *all* Christian schools are devoid of critical thinking and exposure to alternative viewpoints. Labels, unfortunately, are an accepted part of dialogue and debate. But, just as a "humanist" abhors the occasional broad-brush attacks of some Christians, so this Christian would plead for what FREE INQUIRY advocates—an open forum. Christianity is a reasonable world-view. And there are many Christians who *do* think.

Because of the quantity and length of your articles in this issue, and because much of what is thought about "fundamentalist Christian schools" does not apply to my own institution, I will direct my comments toward Kathy L. Collins's article, "Children Are Not Chattel." Assumptions made herein concerning education, the family, and basic democratic rights are, quite frankly, frightening.

To presume that compulsory school attendance is the best system fails to acknowledge historical and philosophical background. In the early days of our nation, education was offered, not mandated. The positive results of this initial American experiment have been well documented (see, for example, *Is Public Education Necessary?* by Samuel Blumenfeld). Moreover, the presuppositions and beliefs of parents ought not be so quickly excluded from the educational framework of our children. Teacher certification, too, while maintaining high ideals, does not guarantee quality education. Competency tests taken across the country have borne this out by their disparaging results.

Innuendo and *ad hominem* arguments are an unfortunate part of Ms. Collins's discussion. To say backhandedly that the child's welfare is not the utmost concern of homeschoolers is scurrilous at best. Making the exception the rule ("the law that prevents them from legally teaching their kids prevents someone else from abusing theirs") is also an obvious chink in proper reasoning. Furthermore, parents are not averse to testing or periodic review by qualified educators in most cases. Certainly the "ownership" issue is a given. Yet, since the state runs the educational system, it would seem the state claims the rights Ms. Collins would prohibit to parents. Where is the equity here?

Since children are not born to the state but to the parents, the question of rights and freedom weigh heavily in favor of the latter. Of course, abuse is a concern. But do we sabotage the freedoms of the many for the violations of a few?

Mark Eckel
Chaplain, Shiloh Christian School
Mandan, N. Dak.

Kathy L. Collins argues that to permit home-schooling by other than state-certified teachers is to risk everything from bad education to child abuse. She presents no evidence, no results of scholarly studies to support her opinion; and she neglects to assess the countervailing dangers to children from exposure to government education and happen-as-may peer relationships. These failures vitiate any value her observations might be supposed to have.

Ms. Collins would have us believe that the growing national trend to exempt home- and private-schools from state certification requirements represents nothing more than the squalid political triumph of misguided fundamentalist zealots. On the contrary, it is a triumph of common sense and funda-

(Continued on p. 56)

Editorials

Breaking with the Old Humanism . . .

Humanism can trace its roots deep into history—from ancient Greece and Rome, through the Renaissance and Enlightenment and the birth of modern science, to the democratic revolutions of the modern world. And, today, there are hundreds of millions of people throughout the world who accept humanistic ideas: They share a commitment to reason and the use of science as ways of understanding nature and resolving human problems; they are skeptical of unproven claims of supernatural religions; they are committed to expanding human rights and freedoms; they believe that one can achieve a fulfillment and happiness in this life.

Humanism has begun to self-consciously develop as an organized movement only since World War II. The need to organize is clear: We must defend the free mind against the encroachments of dogmatic religions and ideologies that denigrate human freedom; more important, we must foster communities for those who reject the traditional religions.

Unfortunately, the existing humanist organizations—particularly in North America—are stagnant. They began with such high expectations, but their membership still numbers approximately 10,000 to 12,000, no more than twenty years ago. (There are single congregations in the south that have more members than the entire humanist movement!) We are aware of the paradox. Humanism, particularly *secular* humanism, is considered by many to be a powerful force in the modern world. Indeed, the religious right considers our influence so pervasive and insidious that we've become their *bete noire*. Yet, as a movement, humanism continues to languish—though there are some notable exceptions in Europe, as in Norway and the Netherlands.

Why has the movement failed to grow, particularly in the United States? One reason suggests itself right away: People aren't sure what humanism is. And why? *Humanists themselves are confused about humanism's functions and goals.*

All too many humanist organizations have followed a *religious* model. The American Ethical Union, the American Humanist Assocation, the Fellowship of Religious Humanists, and the Society for Humanistic Judaism all consider themselves to be religious; they all claim religious tax-exemptions. As critics indict humanism as a religion—seeking to extirpate it from the schools, for example—the confusion demonstrated by these humanist organizations goes from the absurd to the appalling. How can humanism claim to offer an alternative to the religious model when humanist leaders embrace that model? Or how can a humanist reply to Judge W. Brevard Hand and Pat Robertson when they seek to throw good science out of the classroom because good science is humanistic science and humanism, according to most humanist leaders, is a religion?

The only consistently *nonreligious* humanist magazine in the United States is FREE INQUIRY, and the only consistently secular humanist organization is the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH). We believe that it has been a profound error for humanists to regard humanism as a religion. It is a *semantic* error: Since humanism offers no supernatural explanations for life or nature, no dogma, and no prescribed devotions and rituals, as religion does, why call it a religion, why use such a monumentally inappropriate word? And it is a *tactical* error: the religious model, which descends from religious dogma, simply does not attract those who have broken with, or who have never belonged to, religion.

That is why we have consciously broken with the old humanism—and why we have been forced to modify the word *humanism*, which at one time represented sterling and imaginative ideals, with the word *secular*.

. . . *Eupraxophy*

What emerges from the preceding discussion, of course, is that we need a new vocabulary to describe our position. While humanism is not a religion, it is more than a purely philosophical endeavor, for it also involves an open-ended commitment to a set of beliefs. It draws on the scientific method to understand nature, but it also expresses a distinctive set of ethical values. So we may ask: Is there something *beyond* philosophy and science that is not purely intellectual, that is independent of religion, that expresses both a world-view and an ethical commitment? And is there a term to describe this something?

Harry Stopes-Roe, president of the British Humanist Association, has perceptively proposed the phrase *life stance* to designate a world-view that embraces a set of moral values. This, we feel, is an important advance. To the ears of many Americans, however, perhaps *stance* connotes something more passive than what we are aiming for; moreover, its roots in the English language might impede its international adoption.

Scouring the etymological dictionaries, and hoping to put together a term that will be adopted by several languages, we have invented *eupraxophy*. Derived from the Greek roots *eu* (meaning "good"), *praxis* ("action"), and *sofia* ("wisdom"), *eupraxophy* denotes a view of the good life, the good life's active expression, and an approach to nature that employs the wisdom inherent in the scientific method.

Eupraxophy: a nonreligious, scientific, and philosophical position that embraces a secularly grounded set of moral convictions. We say, *eupraxophers of the world, unite!* Let us hope that we can keep *this* word safe from the kidnappers.

We invite our readers' comments.

—*Paul Kurtz*

Catholicism and Change

FREE INQUIRY's conference in Washington, D.C., provided a forum for a fascinating—yet also bewildering—exchange of ideas between secular humanists and liberal Catholic theologians. We saw, for example, Robert Francouer, a married priest, decry in the strongest terms his church's refusal to treat its laity as mature, responsible adults. We saw Ernest Fortin, a Catholic theologian, demonstrate with elegant rigor how his church's "doctrine of rights" is but a house of cards. We saw Dan Maguire, a full professor at a Catholic university, charge his Vatican with heresy. And we saw Marjorie Maguire, a Catholic author and mother, vigorously defend a woman's right to abortion. It was impressive to see the moral imagination of these and other speakers. At least on the fringes of the church, there seems to be a growing humanist influence in areas such as sexuality, papal authority, and theology.

The exchange nonetheless left some humanists scratching their heads. Why had these speakers remained within the Catholic church if their differences with it were so numerous and basic? Indeed, many of the Catholics seemed wholly humanistic: They agreed that the authority of the Bible had been subverted by biblical criticism and that we really know almost nothing about the historical Jesus; they agreed that in matters of dogma and political influence the Catholic

church over its history has been as fallible and corrupt as any other human institution; and they agreed that the pope and the bishops no longer deserve the unquestioning obedience of their flock. In sum, they affirmed the spirit of democracy and the right to self-determination. But, when you are a Catholic, what is left to hang on to when you have let go of the pope, the Bible, and church tradition?

Dan Maguire remains a member of the church, he says, because of Christianity's "essential moral creed," which (as he notes in the talk reprinted in this issue) has never been "incarnated" in historical Christianity. It was not clear to many in Washington, however, why Maguire and some of the other speakers thought that it was worth belonging to a religious institution that had never "incarnated" its "essential moral creed." Perhaps, being born Catholics, they want to remain attached to their family's roots or to the admittedly fascinating rituals of their church—regardless of its dogma. Perhaps they hope to overturn two thousand years of authoritarian religious rule "from the inside," as it were; then they would have a ready-made and powerful institution to promote humanistic ideals on a world-wide scale.

But it should be pointed out that this strategy could backfire. By remaining within a church whose very foundations they attack, these dissident Catholics could be making traditional authoritarian Catholicism *stronger*. After all, one could argue that the church has been able to coopt the voices of some of its harshest critics. No matter how free-minded these fringe Catholics are, their primary message will always be that they support the church.

In recent years, whenever the Catholic church has attempted to silence one of its own—Catholic University's Charles Curran or Hans Küng at the University of Tübingen, for example—it has provoked a significant crisis. Perhaps it has decided that the best way to remain the same is to tolerate a handful of Catholic humanists who boldly demand change.—*Robert Basil*

The Western New York Connection

We are often asked why so many humanist projects begin in Western New York. Indeed, this small patch of land, which lies between Lakes Erie and Ontario, has become the humanist and skeptical center of North America, perhaps even of the world. Several humanist organizations and magazines are located here. A brief tour:

FREE INQUIRY magazine is published by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH, Inc.). Founded in 1980 by Paul Kurtz as a nonprofit educational organization governed by an independent board, CODESH convenes conferences and symposia. In addition to FREE INQUIRY CODESH also publishes the *Secular Humanist Bulletin* (edited by Tom Flynn and Tom Franczyk). CODESH sponsors the Academy of Humanism, an autonomous and prestigious organization of scholars, scientists, and authors that serves as a secular humanistic think-tank. The magazine also sponsors the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER), headed by Gerald Larue. CSER's Biblical Research and Faith-Healing projects have been actively criticizing uncorroborated religious claims.

Among its other activities, CODESH helped found the James Madison Memorial Committee, which was instrumental in getting Madison's homestead gifted to the United States and, just as important, in helping to keep alive an appreciation for our fourth president's contributions to religious liberty. The recently founded "Robert G. Ingersoll Memorial Committee" hopes to commemorate the great freethinker with similar success (see page 18).

In the past year FREE INQUIRY has helped initiate three important new organizations: (1) the Secular Humanist Friendship Centers, (2) the Secular Sobriety Group movement, headed by Jim Christopher, and (3) Catholics Anonymous, a support group for lapsed, nominal, and ex-Catholics. Each organization publishes its own newsletter.

FREE INQUIRY and CODESH employ fifteen full- or part-time people. Its headquarters are in Buffalo, New York, not far from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, or CSICOP, shares a building with FREE INQUIRY. CSICOP was founded in 1976 by Paul Kurtz as an independent organization committed to the scientific investigation of paranormal claims (like psychic phenomena, UFOlogy, astrology, and the various pseudosciences). CSICOP publishes its own quarterly journal, the *Skeptical Inquirer* (edited by Kendrick Frazier), which has more than 35,000 subscribers and 70,000 readers, and sponsors annual conferences. There are now over sixty local, regional, and national groups in North America and around the world that share similar aims with CSICOP. The primary task of these groups, and of CSICOP, is to foster critical thinking among the public.

CSICOP, which has a scientific tax-exemption, has eighteeen full- or part-time staff. Several authors and researchers associated with CSICOP—James Randi and Martin Gardner,for example—contribute regularly to both FREE INQUIRY and the *Skeptical Inquirer*. Neither the *Skeptical Inquirer* nor CSICOP, however, takes any positions on religion, and those affiliated with them need not support the aims of FREE INQUIRY, CODESH, or the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion.

Prometheus Books was founded by Paul Kurtz in 1969. It is an independent firm, although a substantial portion of its preferred stock is held by CODESH and CSICOP. Prometheus is unique in its devotion to publishing books on humanism and skepticism—and it is the largest such press in the world, now publishing approximately fifty books a year, with more than 350 titles on its backlist. Prometheus, which also brings out books on philosophy, education, science, literary criticism, and sexology, has an in-house staff of thirty full- or part-time people as well as twenty sales representatives. The name *Prometheus* is taken from the mythological Greek hero who stole fire from the Olympian Gods and gave it—and the arts and sciences—to humankind.

The American Humanist Association (AHA) was founded in 1941 and has a religious tax-exemption. Publisher of the *Humanist* magazine (edited by Fred Edwords and Lloyd Morain), the AHA has approximately 4000 members. Although it has no organizational or financial relationship to FREE INQUIRY, the *Skeptical Inquirer*, or Prometheus Books, it sometimes works cooperatively with these organizations on some projects. The AHA was brought to Amherst, New York, from San Francisco in 1978 by Paul Kurtz, who served as editor of the *Humanist* from 1967 to 1978.

The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) was founded in 1952 to defend values and personal liberties in the post-war era and, more particularly, to achieve effective cooperation among its member organizations, which now number over sixty, representing twenty-two countries and three million members. The IHEU, which is headquartered in Utrecht, Holland, convenes biannual congresses and publishes a journal, *International Humanist* (edited by Don Page).

The Tenth Congress of the IHEU will be held at the State University of New York at Buffalo (Amherst Campus) and Niagara Falls, Canada, in August 1988. Its theme: "Building a World Community."

Why is there so much humanist action going on between Lakes Erie and Ontario? Maybe it's the weather, which some say is unbeatable. •

Humanism as a Life Stance

Harry Stopes-Roe

What is humanism? A philosophy, a culture, a religion, an academic discipline?

One thing is clear: If humanism is to hold its rightful place in the world arena, it must be seen for what it is. On the one hand, it must be seen in its particularity — what makes it uniquely "humanism." On the other hand, it must be seen in relation to other things that claim comparable value. I am especially concerned with looking at humanism in this latter way: How does it function for individuals, for society? In one sense, one could say that it functions as a *religion;* in another, of course, one should vigorously reject that word. My aim here is to resolve this conflict.

We require a new concept and new words to express it. I suggest *life stance,* an expression that has been current in Britain for more than ten years and one that is steadily gaining acceptance there and worldwide to describe what is good in both humanism *and* religion—without being encumbered by what is bad in religion.

My real concern, of course, is the *concept* of a *life stance*—not the words. But one can only handle a concept when one has words to describe it; this is a fact of human thinking. Therefore the words are important. Unfortunately, the words *life stance* are not ideal—no created term for something of vital importance can spring forward as adequate for what one wants. If the new expression is entirely new, it will be mystifying; if it has any prior associations, it will be deflected from its new sense. Some people say the impression given by *life stance* is too static. But I suggest this is not right. *Stance* is a position *for action;* it is a way of holding oneself in action. Or it may be taken as a secure base to support action. That it is secure does not imply that it does not change; a life stance grows as understanding grows.

In what follows, I attempt to describe various faces of humanism, with the aim of showing what is *important* about it, what constitutes it as a *life stance.*

Harry Stopes-Roe is president of the British Humanist Association.

Science and Philosophy

Science and philosophy, with history, are bases from which we set out to decide such fundamental questions as the existence of God, immortality, and the source of moral duty. But it is not their job to *tell* us what to believe or how to live.

They are impartial with respect to all conclusions. Their concern is to follow evidence; and, even after centuries, their conclusions are never truly secure. In the meantime, however, life must be lived; and certain ultimate beliefs are implicit in the justification of the way one lives. They determine the morality of the decisions one makes.

Therefore, however agnostic or tentative humanists may be, we do make some assumptions. We accept a naturalistic view of the universe, because that is what, it seems, science is presenting; and we accept a number of conclusions concerning human nature. These are assumptions of our lives; they are not dogmatic, but they are part of what defines humanism. If evidence turned against them, science would change; humanism, in contrast, would collapse.

Humanism depends on science and philosophy, but it is both less and more than them. It is not involved in the detail of the debates, but it presupposes particular answers. More important, it enters areas where science and philosophy do not. Although science, in psychology and sociology, is concerned with experience's subjective aspects, it treats them impartially; it does not discriminate between the good and the bad; it makes no *moral* judgments. In a similar way, philosophy, in the contemporary academic sense of British and American universities, is abstract, "thought about thought." Humanism, on the other hand, does make substantial judgments of values and facts; it is thus "more" than both science and philosophy.

Philosophy of Life

But philosophy is also used in a wider, more popular sense: a "philosophy of life."

A philosophy of life includes a view of the world, of humanity's place in it—and of "me" personally. And it includes a view of moral value. But humanism goes beyond even this; it has a practical, emotional, *motivating* quality as well. Against this, the bias of philosophy is towards the intellectual, the conceptual, and the academic. This bias is so much a part of its popular image that I doubt it can be overcome. Philosophy, with its hyperintellectual and elitest connotations, will always put off many ordinary people. So, one must show how humanism is more than a philosophy.

Other languages have words that are more apt. The German *Weltanschauung* is well known, and it has close affinities with the Dutch *levensbeschouwing.* One takes "world" and the other "life," but both replace "philosophy" with a word that translates literally as "view," though it also carries the idea of "consideration" or "reflection." Jaap von Praag, who was until his recent death a leading figure in Dutch humanism, called humanism a *levensovertuiging,* which is stronger, because *overtuiging* means "conviction."

Morality and Ethics

The word *ethics,* or *morality,* seems clear enough: It represents the idea of goodness, fulfillment, satisfaction of the deepest kind; we think of our fellows and of what we ought to do to spread this goodness and fulfillment. All this is "morality," or "ethics," what expresses the best in life and living. But it is not as simple as that.

Morality and *ethics* are shared terms in that all people agree that morality or ethics expresses what is best; but it is deeply controversial what exactly *is* best. The maintenance of a shared society is only possible when there is a substantial range of agreement, but there is no forseeable prospect of resolving the disagreements.

One might say that humanism is *a* morality and that Christianity is another—except that neither is *only* a morality. Both involve factual claims that are necessary to give roots to their respective moralities. And both are more besides. The words *ethical culture* bring out some of the "more."

Ethical Culture

"Ethical culture" carries the "more" over and above theories of fact and value. But any engagement in ethical culture presupposes some particular ethics or morality. The words *ethical culture* are particularly associated with humanism; but, taken at their face value, Christians can equally claim the right to share in them. They have their view of what constitutes ethical culture, based on their view of what is best. Marxists and Muslims would not use the words; but they would certainly share the idea of working along a road to a better state of affairs—which is what ethical culture represents.

Humanism, Marxism, Christianity, and Islam may all be called "ethical cultures"; each is distinguished by the view it holds of the way and the goal.

But this is not sufficient. The words are *too* particularly associated with humanism. And this association is not merely accidental. Ethical culture has a "this-worldly" orientation that can be seen as positively excluding dependence on God and His grace. It was, actually, introduced by those who wanted to express the fact (as humanists claim) that ethics is independent of theology. Ethical culture can be used to express the practical and life-expressing aspects of religion, its actively developed values, convictions, ceremonies and community. But it cuts out the God-focus of religion—as theists see "religion." Thus Christians —to say nothing of Muslims—would object to their religion being described as "an ethical culture." Some humanists might also object to this extension of the words; they look upon "ethical culture" as something that is essentially theirs.

Humanism

It is time, I think, to review the points I have made so far. Humanism is a totality of many elements, and it cannot be reduced to any of them. Its base is a series of claims. It has a particular view of the universe and of humanity's place in it. It also makes claims about what is important, about what constitutes a moral framework.

The above, in fact, expresses humanism as a *life stance.* Humanism is distinguished by the particular claims it makes and the particular character of the consequent life and practice. It claims that what is ultimately important is, first, the existential reality of sentient beings, their enjoyments and their sufferings; second, the moral sensibility that is in each person. These together give inspiration to humanists; they define our ideals and ethics. Humanism also is a relationship, binding individuals to their fellows, and it thus gives meaning to each.

We understand reality on the basis of science and philosophy—but also on the basis of our moral sensibility itself. Humanism is all this, as a living, working organism.

Religion

But is this not *religion?* Here we are struck by dire verbal confusions. The word means different things in different countries—and, as in the United States and Britain, among different groups of people in each country. In British law *religion* requires the inclusion of God or gods. (The law does not quibble over atheistic Buddhism.) Humanism is accepted as *analogous to* a religion, but *not* a religion; and it is a legal charity accordingly. In United States law, the definition of *religion* does not require belief in God or gods. In Dutch the word for religion is "Godsdienst"—i.e., "God's duty." In German, on the other hand, "die Religion" includes humanism; indeed, the leading German humanist organization is called "Freireligiöser."

Many people see religion as expressing an identity rooted in feelings as well as intellect—as expressing an affirmation of involvement in an ethical community; as expressing a commitment, even a moral passion, that is oriented by life's ultimate issues; above all, religion is to them an affirmation and a life that is not merely moral but a true response to that which is ultimately important in the universe. I hope I have caught something of what they mean; the above passage is mainly built from quotes from basic literature of the New York Society for Ethical Culture. What I have just set out is of vital importance—it is so to me personally.

Granted all that, it is inadequate to talk of humanism as "a general philosophy"—a philosophy "of humanitarianism" or anything else; but can *religion* be accepted as the word to express what it is?

The word religion is, in fact, used for all that; but it is *also* used in a way that presupposes, or explicitly asserts, that everything *can only* be found in relation to God. This latter fact cannot be overlooked. It is clear that no humanist in Holland—or in Britain—would accept that humanism is a religion. Sometimes god-religious people say they use the word *religion* in the wide sense. I have studied many examples—and I have never found any substantial instance when such a declaration has been carried through effectively.

On the black side, god-religion has been associated, widely and often, with bigotry, fanaticism, and the suppression of natural enjoyments. Many people use the words *religion* and *religious* to express this—i.e., as terms of abuse. How can one hope to forget this part of the word's history?

These words cannot but be divisive in the humanist movement. One the one hand, they are powerfully tied to God, and they are widely used as terms of abuse. On the other, they are used to express matters that are of vital importance to humanism. It is this vital importance that makes the confusion so destructive. The antagonism has done much to pervert true understanding of humanism and its place in the world. We must, therefore, find the new words to express what this is, our identity and our ideals.

Life Stance

Right at the beginning I said that no newly created term can have the emotional power of a well-established one. Because the emotional power of *religion* cuts both ways, I suggest that humanists cool their use of that word. It would help, perhaps, if those who focus on the negative would talk of "god-religion." My present concern, however, is an alternative to the positive use.

I want *life stance* to embrace everything that is good in religion, but without partiality, one way or the other, as to whether God is real or not. Some life stances accept God; some do not.

It is interesting to note how Christians, and god-religious people in general, don't want to open up the concept of religion in this way. Presumably, they instinctively recognize that it is an overwhelming threat to them and their authority. Once people accept that all that is good and important does not *necessarily* presuppose a God, the privileged status of Christianity is lost.

On the other hand, religious people may have something of a case against the *words life stance:* they are too human-centered. Remember the Dutch word for religion—"God's duty." One value of *stance* here is its association with *ground*—God is (for the religious) the ground of our being. I do feel that religious people should—if they claim *any* wish to cooperate—accept this aspect of "stance" as a recognition of God as the ground of our being. Yet *life ground* would be too inactive. *Life conviction* is even more human-oriented than *life stance,* and therefore it would be less effective as a shared term.

What I have found more surprising than the religionists' objections is the degree of opposition among humanists. I take this up in my last section.

Toward a Definition

How can we focus the idea and ideal of *life stance* into something useful as a definition? This can and should be a shared term between the god-religious and ourselves, one that does not discriminate in favor of either them or us. This is my definition:

> *Life stance:* The style and content of an individual's or a community's relationship with that which is of ultimate importance;

the presuppositions of this, and the consequences for life that flow from it.

A life stance is theistic or naturalistic according to whether it sees "that which is of ultimate importance" in terms of God or something naturalistic. It is fundamental that a god-religion—or simply "religion," as people would say—is precisely a theistic life stance. The two terms are synonymous, each carrying the same depth of meaning. "Life stance" has latent in it all the power of "religion" (in the sense of "god-religion"); this power is realized (as the god-religious would say) in the acknowledgment of God.

When one identifies "that which is of ultimate importance," one is making two claims. First, one claims that this "thing" exists, that it is real. Humanism claims that there are sentient beings with enjoyments and sufferings and that moral sensibility has a unique place in human living. Christianity claims that God is real and incarnate in Christ. Second, one claims that this reality *is important*—indeed, ultimately important; it defines what moral importance and moral duty are. I present my interpretation of humanism as a sketch of a possibility, not as authoritative; it is, I believe, sufficient for the development of morality, though I must leave that aside for now. I hope that even those who are most antipathetic to creeds and dogmas will concur in my suggestion that sentient beings, with their enjoyments sufferings, and moral sensibility, are of ultimate importance to humanists.

Harmony among Humanists

God-religion has done untold damage to the realization of moral sensibility. Its excesses have alienated some intelligent people from the very idea of tackling the ultimate questions of life seriously and cooperatively—and working together according to what one finds. These are the capacities that supremely distinguish human beings from the other animals; and they have been depraved and corrupted by the god-religions. Some humanists are so disturbed by the evil they see that they cannot bear to acknowledge that religions have done any good whatever.

Over and against this, the word *religion* also has a kind of charisma for others; it represents for them these vital aspects of human experience.

Thus confusion becomes embittered.

Humanists are divided into two camps—sometimes, it seems they are at war—according to how they respond to the word

(continued on p. 56)

The Humanist Identity

Levi Fragell

When you travel around the United States, as well as Europe, almost everywhere you see a cross—on the top of churches, of course, but also on hilltops. Every priest and minister wears the cross around his neck, and so too, it seems, a hundred million nice girls. The first thing Catholics in Miami did when they were preparing for the arrival of the pope in August 1987 was erect a one-hundred-foot-high steel cross.

Why is it so important for the churches to place their symbol everywhere for people to see? In former days, we might have said that the Christians were impelled to do so by their magical beliefs. But today we mainly look upon the use of such potent signs and symbols as essential elements in a communication and marketing process. Organizations and companies put a lot of money into the creation of a sign, symbol, or logo. And when they have created it, they put it everywhere they can—and they seem to be proud of it.

The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) also has a symbol, called "Happy Man" or "Happy Person." You may travel all around the world, walking up and down every street, and never see it. You may visit humanist groups, humanist buildings and offices—and not see it. You may go to a humanist conference and not see it. Why not? Because humanists tend to think it isn't necessary to tell the world that they exist. Truth, they believe, will penetrate society by itself, and the best philosophy will win the battle of ideas because it is the best.

I think they are wrong. A rather primitive and partly harmful religion has dominated the Western world for two thousand years, but not because it is the truth or a better way of thinking.

I believe in a future for humanism, but we may very easily lose the battle if we act as if fighting is unnecessary.

I don't support hard-selling marketing methods when it comes to beliefs. I was a pentecostal preacher when I was young, and never again shall I try to persuade a person to give up his or her convictions to follow me. But I do believe that humanism should be visible in our world. How can people make a fair personal choice of their way of life when they do not know that there exists a well-founded alternative to the religious creeds? I know that I would have lived a better life had I known at the age of twenty-two that humanism and humanists existed.

Thanks to Paul Kurtz's book *The Humanist Alternative* and Corliss Lamont's book *The Philosophy of Humanism*, I finally came to understand a bit of what humanism was all about. But how many have such an urge for enlightenment that they—like me—on a visit to New York City would walk from bookstore to bookstore searching for a book about humanism?

I am very glad that a couple of the humanist organizations in the United States are progressing pretty well. But, as far as I can see, Jerry Falwell and his friends have done more in the last ten years to promote humanism than all the North American humanist movements have done in this century.

Of course we cannot blame ourselves for Jerry Falwell's greater success in informing people about the existence of humanism. The fundamentalist organizations have a lot of money, even if some of their members are rather poor. The humanist organizations have very little money, even if some of their members are rather rich.

I think there will be some profit to gain from the televangelists' humanist-hunting. The persecuted minority is far better off than the forgotten minority. Indeed, most minorities have had their historical chance in periods of persecution.

Maybe it is now a bit late to arrange demonstrations at the leading universities. But I do think a lot more work has to be done on the campus and in the streets. Twice a year I go down to the main street of Oslo, together with my younger friends, to hand out leaflets about the state-church system and the Christian constitution of Norway. In my circular letters to the 150 branch sections of our organization I exhort the local leaders to do this street-work or distribute our flyers through the mail. Out of every hundred information brochures that are put into mailboxes we get two replies. One thousand flyers yield twenty replies. It costs postage, paper, and some walking, but we gain new members every day. Over the last five years we have never brought in fewer than ten new members a day.

Levi Fragell is the president of Norway's Human-Etisk Forbund and co-chairperson of the International Humanist & Ethical Union.

I want to mention two more, perhaps controversial, points:

When the IHEU was founded in Amsterdam in 1952, the founding fathers and mothers carried a lot of different labels. They were rationalists, freethinkers, skeptics, ethical culturists, atheists, free religionists, Unitarians, and humanists. Today—thirty-five years later—we are still rationalists, freethinkers, skeptics, ethical culturists, atheists, free religionists, Unitarians, and humanists.

Each of us publishes our magazines, but you have to look at the bottom of page twenty-two to see that the magazine also represents something called humanism.

There are exceptions. In fact, five out of nine full members of the IHEU use the term *humanist* in the names of their organizations, and the number of magazines that identify themselves as *humanist* magazines has increased. But it seems to me that these facts are more coincidental than a result of a most urgent and common international policy.

My second nasty point pertains to the confusing way the word *humanism* is used:

In Amsterdam in 1952 we united under the banner *ethical* humanism. But, since then, we have seen a long list of humanisms: secular humanism, naturalistic humanism, scientific humanism, democratic humanism, and even religious humanism. How should ordinary people—even highly educated ordinary people—be able to see anything but academic sectarianism in the simultaneous promotion of five to ten separate varieties of humanism?

Can we not agree that humanism *is* ethical, secular, naturalistic, scientific, and democratic, and that the word *humanism* covers all of them? (I leave alone "religious humanism" because it causes very specific semantic problems.)

Of course there should be a great variety of attitudes, interpretations, and even ethical conclusions. But for organizational purposes it does not serve the sixty different organizations within the IHEU to have sixty different names for their philosophy. If we don't succeed in getting the groups in our movement to identify themselves as humanists within the next few years, the already extremely weak world organization of humanists will die and become one of the less important episodes of the changing twentieth century. The different national organizations, with their odd names, will die as well—many of them have already been dead for some years, even if they won't lie down. The battle will be lost.

In my opinion the time has come to make a choice for common identity. I vote for *humanism,* consisting of eight letters—and not one more. •

On Nincompoopery and Nothingarianism

Beverley M. Earles

Bertrand Russell once defined a nincompoop as "a person who serves mankind in ways for which they are not grateful." Here we shall explore the extent to which nincompoopery has prevailed in the wider humanist movement.

When I surveyed more than fifty humanist groups in the United States and New Zealand, I found leaders (or officeholders) complaining about much the same problems—small numbers, poor participation, an absence of young people. Further study showed similar problems in Switzerland, Luxembourg, Scotland, and Australia. All of these groups are principally following a lecture/discussion model, one that evolved as part of the nineteenth-century freethought movement. American humanist leaders beat themselves over the head trying to provide speakers of interest, yet even the majority of their *own members* do not attend with any regularity. And what is the typical explanation for this state of affairs? "Humanists are non-joiners, individualists." It is a phrase I have seen and heard throughout the movement—Northern and Southern Hemispheres—and it has the dangerous implication that humanists are somehow unique in their non-joining and non-participatory habits. I suggest that such a notion is nothing less than a psychological rationale that cushions the blows of repeated failure. It has evolved as a myth to account for the assumed and irritating attractiveness of churches, and it paralyzes in two principal ways:

• By producing resignation. A handful of dedicated members sigh deeply and proceed to "keep on keeping on" alone. They are convinced that this is the way it will always be but secretly hope that humanists might one day change their attitudes and come leaping into the fray with vast amounts of enthusiasm, energy, and money. Thinking such as this expresses a perverse kind of millenarianism.

• By sustaining nincompoopery. Leaders continue to employ the same tired methods in trying to entice their own members to participate, even when this has borne little fruit in the past and is unlikely to do so in the future. Nominal members are not grateful for such efforts; and, surely, even the leaders themselves must receive little self-gratification.

As long as the "humanists are non-joiners" delusion is entertained, there is little hope that organizations will haul themselves out of the quagmire. The leaders in question do not appear to have put their situation in context. If they did they would find, for instance, that 40 percent of the United States population is not affiliated and that this situation has been stable since at least 1973. Of those who are affiliated, attendance rates among Protestants are about the same as for larger humanist groups and Ethical Societies, between 35 and 40 percent. In New Zealand 59 percent of the population does not attend church in the course of one year, and another 16 percent attend fewer than five times.

What does all this suggest? It suggests that, *in their present forms,* communal organizations concerned with the promotion of values and meaning appeal neither to a sizable proportion of Americans nor to the majority of New Zealanders. Even in countries where there is a history of religious establishment there has been a marked overall decrease in church participation as this century has progressed.

In a very important sense churches and humanist organizations in the West *share the same fundamental problem*—how to attract increasing numbers of unaffiliated people. For the churches the problem is one of reconvincing lost sheep that Christianity *is* really relevant to modern living; for humanists it is a matter of persuading people of the timeliness of the humanist way. Unless we understand the position of the unaffiliated and develop relevant organizational forms we will not take charge of the problem.

The unaffiliated can be referred to as "nothingarians." This is not a pejorative term; it simply refers to persons who for the most part seem to get along well enough without having to consciously articulate or dwell upon what their primary values are or

Beverly Earles is completing her Ph.D. in Religious Studies at Victoria University in New Zealand.

what they should believe about the universe. These people are *not* necessarily leading meaningless lives or in need of therapy. In the event of a death or trauma they fall back on what has been traditionally available, but without feeling altogether comfortable. "Nothingarians" exemplify a stage of transition in the process of secularization and are increasingly being raised in agnostic rather than nominally religious households. Countless numbers of Westerners of my generation and its children fit the "nothingarian" description.

Of particular importance to humanists is the fact that the nothingarian generations embody a certain kind of indifference that does *not* help the promotion of humanism. It is an indifference underlying a statement once made that it is easier to convert a committed Christian to free thought than a nothingarian. Committed humanists and traditionally religious people share an articulated attitude of importance even where they disagree on just about everything else. If nothingarians have actually heard of humanism, it is irrelevant to them for two reasons: (1) they have not yet articulated their own attitudes to the point where a match might be made with the humanist way and commitment won, or (2) they have difficulty finding psychological satisfaction with what they have themselves created. Although they are unaffiliated they continue to hold the diminished view of human capabilities propagated by tradition, and they therefore feel that meaning and values must somehow be part of the structure of the universe—if only they could find them.

If we are to reach nothingarians we obviously need to continue promotion and education through magazines and other literature. It is a slow process, with the principal purpose of *actually bringing humanist issues of meaning and value to mind and of doing so frequently*. The fact that humanists may have weighty matters in the forefront of their concerns does not mean that the majority of nothingarians do.

There are ways to bring in the unaffiliated. The Dutch humanists have attracted 50 percent of the nonbelieving population—including large numbers of young people—and one important part of this success has been the establishment of humanist centers. These centers are more open in function and outlook than a traditional church model and have a host of activities that cover the range of what being human involves—the social, the intellectual, the celebratory, the physical, the ethical, and the aesthetic. People can pick and choose their activities, contribute as much or as little as they wish. The centers serve as introductions to humanism and can lead on to involvement in the many other institutions and foundations that the Dutch humanists have established. A Christian project run along similar lines in suburban Wellington, New Zealand, has also been successful in attracting people from all walks of life *and* is self-sustaining financially. There is no hard-sell of the faith nor creedal test required for participation. The project is a comprehensive scheme that is working in a society where, for all practical purposes, about 75 percent of the population is unchurched. If initial financial difficulties can be overcome there is no obvious reason why a similar center could not work well there for humanists also.

What testimony do these centers provide? An open model is the direction in which other humanist groups should move in the future. It is one that recognizes the increasing degree of individuality that characterizes the Western temperament by giving people breathing space. The lecture/discussion focus of most humanist organizations is replaced by one that acknowledges people to be more than intellects on legs. Forums are held but not in dry funereal tones. They have hiking, music, whale-watching, gallery tours, evenings of celebration, and much more.

The open model is making its debut in the United States. FREE INQUIRY and the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH) have recognized the drawbacks of the ways in which humanism has been organized there in the past and have set out to establish new secular humanist Friendship Centers, which seek to fulfill many of the functions that I am suggesting. This effort, begun little more than a year ago, is developing rapidly in cities across the United States. These centers are not religious, nor do they attempt to follow the church model.

One thing is clear: The church model—as it is typically used by the American Ethical Union, for example—is unlikely to bring healthy institutional longevity. Most of the American Ethical Societies suffer from the same problems as old American Humanist Association chapters, despite having virtually the whole machinery of the national organization behind them and a professional leadership pool to draw on. Those few societies that are thriving—and have a high-proportion of members under the age of fifty—approach ethical humanist living from a very broad base. One in particular has tapped into the momentum of the human-potential movement and has made relevant institutional changes. For as long as the approach remains culturally popular that society will probably flourish. If it keeps its finger on the pulse of further cultural changes it has a chance for sustained growth. In some respects it operates like a humanist center by running dances and other activities for the public.

But, if the church model appears to have but a tenuous hold on people's concerns, we should not assume that humanist centers of a particular cultural flavor are either necessarily sufficient or suited to all Western countries, let alone to other parts of the world. They are something that the Dutch have found works well for them in addition to other organizational forms. Other models that have met with some success include, for example, the Italian Centro Conscienza. This organization achieves a 90 percent average attendance at educational courses that teach self-reliance and responsibility. Fellowship is not a feature of meetings, yet there is no overall shortage of young people. Again, in a totally different part of the world, Dr. Indumati Parikh of the Indian Radical Humanist Association has found that the women's welfare organization, which she co-established in the streets of Bombay, has become a vital means of changing fatalistic Hindu attitudes to those of humanist self-determination. This organization began by catering for five thousand slum dwellers and now reaches some one hundred thousand. Yet another example is the Human-Etisk Forbund i Norge. Here in Norway is a humanist organization that is working well with neither a communally oriented institutional core nor a focus on providing a mail-order information service. It has 31,000 members and has experienced growth at a rate of about two thousand per year for the past ten years. The emphasis has been on providing secular alternatives for ceremonies demanded by cultural tradition. The vast majority of members are passive and wish simply to profit from the ceremonies and any success in fighting religious privilege. The Secretary General, Levi Fragell, estimates that only about 6 percent of the Norwegian membership might be interested in a fellowship-centered organization.

Certainly there is much that organizations can learn from one another. In this respect, the Dutch example provides a good model. The humanist organization there actually *involves* several humanistic one-issue groups—not just invites them to a platform. This can be an important strategy for all parties from the point of view of recruitment and the extension of influence on a wide level. One-issue people who have *humanist* attitudes should be those with whom we have the fewest barriers, because

they are *consciously committed.* The point is to show them that it is also worthwhile being a member of a humanist organization because humanism articulates a broad foundation upon which their efforts for gay rights, peace, reproductive freedom, and so forth, can rest and find ongoing nourishment and publicity. It can provide meaningful rites-of-passage ceremonies, ethics education for children, and humanist counseling. Becoming a humanist would not mean that one couldn't still focus on one issue.

In learning from one another, however, we have constantly to remind ourselves of the obvious, namely, to be sensitive to peculiar cultural rhythms and nuances. In particular there is a feature pertaining to some European contexts that needs to be understood by outsiders. Whether explicitly stated or not, the larger groups regard humanism as a functional alternative to state or traditional religion. With this in mind, they have sought the privileges accorded the churches, with varying degrees of success. Privileges have included tax exemptions, the financing of humanist counseling and ethics education in the schools, and a per capita share in church taxes. The Dutch Constitution, for example, provides for equal treatment of religious and "life stance" groups. This functional-alternative approach has certainly provided important sources of revenue for European humanist ventures and clearly makes excellent indigenous sense. However, it is also an approach that is culturally alien to American, New Zealand, Australian, and many other humanists and is therefore perhaps not a self-evidently viable option in these contexts.

While not all organizations may be able or even wish to emulate the Europeans, it is worth recognizing that the functional-alternative approach can bridge gaps in understanding that exist between humanists and nothingarians. Some Western European groups (the Dutch, Norwegians, British, and Finns) long ago discovered that the provision of secular alternatives to Christian-run ceremonies strikes an important chord in their cultures. In Norway, where confirmation continues to be of considerable cultural importance, the humanists confirmed four thousand teenagers in May of this year. The Finns and Dutch have had considerable success with funerals; a concentrated promotion of this ceremony in New Zealand, where there is only the choice between a clergyman or doing it oneself, could well be fruitful. The Society of Humanistic Judaism in the United States has made certain that important Jewish celebrations and rites of passage are given a meaningful secular form. To abandon them altogether in allergic, anti-ritualistic fits to which some humanists are given would in fact undermine the society's existence.

There is just no place for nincompoopery in a world in dire need of a humanism. If leaders see that their goals are not being reached, then they need to be sufficiently brave to cast doubt upon those commitments and beliefs that have served to keep the failing system in operation. This can be a painful process—immense emotional investments have been made in particular methods. But the humanist commitment to free inquiry and growth demands it. Humanist organizations *do* need to meet the need for intellectual stimulation, because mental acumen is an integral part not only of being a humanist but of being human. Clearly, however, the lecture/discussion meeting in its present forms does not work. The variations on the church model are also showing signs of obsolescence.

In finding what can work we need to recognize that the big pool of potential members is under forty-five years of age and "nothingarian." What values and interests do all of our societies have that humanists can plug into? In New Zealand I can answer with one word, "sports." I envisage amateur sports as being of enormous importance as a potential means of introducing New Zealand to humanism for three interrelated reasons: (1) no activity engages the participation of more people; (2) it traditionally operates on a very low budget; (3) it is in harmony with the humanist tradition of the ancient Greeks, which taught a healthy integration of mind and body. The holistic Greek tradition might indeed be a guiding principle for humanist organizations of the future, and it is certainly not out of step with current thinking and values.

Another source of unity might be the aesthetic dimension of living. Too often humanists overlook the very simple fact that young people express values and beliefs in music. If this is not taken into account, whatever models we adopt for our organizations will likely fail to reach younger generations on a gut level.

To conclude: I don't want to sound as though I have a heartless lack of appreciation for the endless efforts of those who have stuck through the ups and downs of their organizations for decades. Indeed, these ideas spring from a respect for what these people have sought—the promotion of the humanist way of living.

Nincompoopery gratifies no one. The golden rule for addressing the public is "Know your audience." Humanist organizations could profit immeasurably by doing just this. •

FREE INQUIRY Speakers and Readers Converge On the Capital

FREE INQUIRY's sixth annual conference was a rousing success. Planned to coincide with Pope John Paul II's visit to the United States, the first day of the conference focused on "voices of dissent" within the Catholic church. Liberal Catholic theologians and secular humanists debated issues ranging from papal authority to nuclear weapons. On Saturday, FREE INQUIRY readers were treated to a discussion of "humanist views of sex and morality" that was by turns comical, controversial, and serious. Saturday's afternoon session pitted two of FREE INQUIRY's attorneys against two noted evangelical attorneys in a sometimes-raucous debate on "Secular Humanism, Textbooks, and the Schools."

Sunday was devoted to "Building Humanism," where international leaders like Rob Tielman and Levi Fragell joined home-front humanists like Secular Sobriety Group-founder Jim Christopher and FREE INQUIRY authors Bob Alley, Joe Barnhart, and Vern Bullough in charting new paths and projects.

But it was perhaps Saturday night—the banquet—that was the conference's high point. There, Sidney Hook was given the first "Distinguished Secular Humanist Award." Hook, in accepting the award, spoke eloquently on the mission of secular humanism. He noted that even in Washington "there is no adequate recognition

Vern Bullough, FREE INQUIRY senior editor.

of the fact that the Constitution is a *secular* document." Perhaps the key feature in the Constitution said Hook, is its guarantee of "the right to dissent, the rights of the minority."

"We are all disappointed," he continued, "in the resurgence of religious faith and practice in our time. When I was a young man, I never dreamed there would be a time when the pope would be greeted with such mass enthusiasm in this country. We can't overlook the magnitude of this religious revival. But we should also focus on how to make the secular alternative more forceful and credible, something that supplies a spirit of fraternity and human association that so many people today demand from membership in religious institutions.

"The great difference between secular humanism and all forms of supernatural religion," Hook noted, "is that they believe that God is above the human judgment of good and evil. Secular humanism maintains that nothing in this world is beyond the human judgment of good and evil. And our whole future depends upon finding a basis on which human beings, in spite of their differences, can work out a form of cooperation."

Hook, who described himself as "the oldest secular humanist at dinner tonight," closed his talk with these words: "I am an unreconstructed believer in intelligence, and in the uses of intelligence, even when it doesn't triumph. We need to make the world a more moral place than we've found it. We need courage."

FREE INQUIRY's coverage of the conference continues on page 34. •

Marjorie Maguire answering questions at "sexual morality" session.

Jim Christopher, founder of the Secular Sobriety Groups.

Tom Franczyk, cofounder of Catholics Anonymous.

Paul Kurtz, Sidney Hook, and Kurt Baier at Saturday's banquet.

Levi Fragell, Rob Tielman, Robert Basil, and Mark Plummer.

Ronald Lindsay, CODESH lawyer, takes on two fundamentalist attorneys.

Gerald Larue faces cameras at the press conference.

Elizabeth Allgeier speaking on "sexual relations and power."

INTERNATIONAL HUMANIST AND ETHICAL UNION

1988 HUMANIST WORLD CONGRESS

State University of New York at Buffalo (Amherst Campus)

and

Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

July 31-August 4, 1988

BUILDING A WORLD COMMUNITY: HUMANISM IN THE 21st CENTURY

BEYOND FRONTIERS

As the 21st century approaches, humankind is faced with radical disruptions of its social institutions and of the planet's ecology. Yet the opportunity to usher in an era of unprecedented human achievement has never been greater. The very discoveries and changes that are now transforming our society provide us with the means of unparalleled improvement of human life.

Can we develop appropriate ethical values that will enable us to live together in harmony and enhance the conditions of life on this earth?

Our moral and ethical values were developed by nomadic and agrarian cultures thousands of years ago, values that were, by contemporary standards, based on now outmoded ideas of the universe and human nature. Yet ancient tribal loyalties, nationalistic and ethnic chauvinism dominate large sectors of the world; the globe is still divided into nation-states, contending religious faiths, and ideological blocs.

Although we need to retain viable moral wisdom, we also need to develop contemporary principles that will serve post-modern civilization. If we are to achieve to the fullest that of which we are capable as a species, we must work toward a constructive, positive visualization of the next century; we must use the best methods of scientific inquiry to solve human problems.

We must foster the attitude that we are all part of a world community and that we have an ethical obligation to humankind as a whole, including a responsibility to generations yet unborn. As our world is transformed by discoveries in medical technology, biogenetic engineering, information transmission, and space travel, our need to live and work together in peace becomes ever more urgent.

The goal of this Congress is to offer answers to these questions: How can we build a 21st-century world community in which war and economic conflict; ecological despoilation; and racial, religious, and sexual rivalries are superseded? How can we improve the standard of living and health care *and* reduce excessive population growth worldwide? Is it possible to maximize human freedom and civil liberties maintaining a genuine social concern for human welfare?

How do we develop a new global ethic, a humanism that is truly planetary in focus?

PROGRAM

July 31, 1988 - Sunday

2 PM-4 PM OPENING SESSION—Plenary I
6 PM-10 PM Cash bar and Dinner (Marriott Hotel); Plenary Session II

August 1, 1988 - Monday

9 AM-12 NOON Concurrent Sessions
2 PM-10 PM Trip to Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada; dinner at the Sheraton-Brock Hotel (speakers and entertainment); Plenary Session III

August 2, 1988 - Tuesday

9 AM-12 NOON Plenary Session IV
12 NOON-2 PM Barbecue lunch on Amherst campus (musicians)
2 PM-4 PM Concurrent Sessions
4:30 PM-6:30 PM Dinner break (not provided for participants)
6:30 PM Artpark or Shaw Festival Theatre (optional)

August 3, 1988 - Wednesday

9 AM-12 NOON Concurrent Sessions
12 NOON-2 PM Lunch (cafeteria deli)
2 PM-4:30 PM Concurrent Sessions
7 PM-10 PM AWARDS BANQUET (Marriott Hotel); Plenary V

August 4, 1988 - Thursday

9 AM-12 NOON CONCLUDING SESSION—Plenary VI

Among the 50 or more speakers will be Joseph Fletcher, Sidney Hook, Corliss Lamont, Milovan Djilas, Paul Kurtz, Harry Stopes-Roe, Magda McHale, Henry Morganthaler, Lester Mondale, Anna Marie Franchi, and others.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

The Need for a New Ethics and a Common Future
Science and Technology in the 21st Century (Academy of Humanism): Scientific and Genetic Engineering, Space Exploration, Space Stations, Space Technology
International Professional Association of Humanist Educators and Counselors
Global War, Global Peace
Ecology; The Population Explosion
The Information Explosion: Computers, TV, Satellites, Radio, Video
Bringing Up Children; Public School Education
Human Rights: Ombudsmen; the Rights of Conscience
Moral Education and Counseling
Growth and Development of the Humanist Movement
Religions of the Future: A Critical Analysis
The Paranormal: Science and Pseudo-science
Sex and Gender in the 21st Century

The tenth congress is truly international, for meetings will be held in both the USA and Canada, marking the theme of the Congress, "Building a World Community." We hope that it will be the largest IHEU Congress ever: We expect between 700 to 1000 delegates and participants from all over the world. Our full list of speakers and entertainers will be listed in our next issue.

The State University of New York is the largest university system in the United States, enrolling over 325,000 students, and the Amherst campus is the largest in the system. Situated on 1200 acres, it is in a suburb of Buffalo, in Amherst, New York, which is one of the fastest growing areas in New York State.

There are six beautiful motels and/or hotels adjacent to the campus, which will be used as the main conference site. There are also student dormitory facilities available. The campus is 8 miles from the Canadian border and 15 miles from Niagara Falls.

Two bus excursions are planned to Canada. The excursion to Niagara Falls, Ontario, will be an all-day outing. The bus will leave at 2:00 PM. Participants can visit Niagara Falls, the seventh wonder of the world, until 7:00 PM. Then a dinner with speakers and entertainment will be held at the Sheraton-Brock Hotel facing Niagara Falls. The bus will return to the hotels and the motels at 10:00 PM.

Artpark, in Lewiston, New York, is a beautiful theater complex overlooking the Niagara gorge. Participants may choose to attend a music or dance program at Artpark *or* an evening theater program at the George Bernard Shaw Festival Theatre located in historic Niagara-On-The-Lake in Canada.

HOTEL AND MOTEL FACILITIES

All of the hotels and motels listed below are adjacent to the Amherst campus of the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Marriott—Conference site (Deluxe accommodations)
1340 Millersport Hwy., Amherst, New York 14226
Telephone: (716) 689-6900

Student dormitories (Amherst campus)
Register through FREE INQUIRY
Telephone: (716) 834-2921

Red Roof Inn (Economy class)
42 Flint Road, Amherst, New York 14226
Telephone: (716) 689-7474

Hampton Inn (First class)
10 Flint Road, Amherst, New York 14226
Telephone: (716) 689-4414

Residence Inn (First class)
100 Maple Road, Amherst, New York 14226
Telephone: (716) 632-6622

Amherst Super 8 (Economy class)
1 Flint Road, Amherst, New York 14226
Telephone: (716) 688-0811

REGISTRATION FORM 1988 IHEU Humanist World Congress

Name _____
(Last/family name) (First name) (Middle initial)

Address _____
(Number and street)

_____
(City) (State) (Zip) (Country)

Telephone Number _____ Organization _____

*Hotel/motel _____ ☐ Single rate _____ ☐ Double rate _____

Arrival date and time _____ Departure date and time _____

***Cost of first night's accommodations must be included with your payment. If you register directly at a hotel/motel, be sure to mention that your registration is for the IHEU Conference.**

There is a pre-registration deduction of 10% for those registering *before* May 1, 1988.

$95 ($85 before May 1, 1988) registration fee for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$85 ($76 before May 1, 1988) registration fee for accompanying participants for _____ person(s)	$ _____
*$45 student registration fee for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$25 each for dinner Sunday, July 31 for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$15 each for bus excursion Monday, August 1 for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$20 each for dinner Monday, August 1 for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$6.75 each for barbecue lunch Tuesday, August 2 for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$12.50 each for bus excursion to Artpark or Shaw Theatre Tuesday, August 2 for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$6.75 each for deli lunch Wednesday, August 3 for _____ person(s)	$ _____
$30 each for Awards Banquet Wednesday August 3 for _____ person(s)	$ _____
Total	$ _____

Full participant: includes admission to all sessions, Congress guide, scheduling packets, coffee breaks.
Accompanying participant (will not receive Congress guide, scheduling packets, etc.)
*With student I.D.

Payment in U.S. funds must accompany Canadian and foreign registration.

Return to: **IHEU Congress, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005 USA**

ON THE BARRICADES

News and Views

Judges Douglas Ginsburg and James Buckley Throw Out CODESH Appeal

A federal appeals court panel has rejected an appeal filed on behalf of the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH) that challenged an earlier decision in the *Kurtz* v. *Baker* case, which stated that nontheists could not be permitted to open a daily session of the United States House of Representatives or the Senate because he or she would not deliver a prayer. The vote of the three-member panel was 2-1.

The opinion was written by former New York Senator James Buckley and joined by Judge Douglas Ginsburg (whose name was shortly thereafter submitted—then withdrawn—as a nominee for a seat on the United States Supreme Court). Buckley argued that CODESH had "no standing" to sue, because the chaplains were simply enforcing the rules of the House and Senate. "They have no authority to satisfy [Professor Paul Kurtz's] requests." Judge Ruth Ginsburg (no relation to Douglas) dissented from Buckley's opinion, claiming that it skirted the real issue Kurtz was raising by focusing simply on whether the court had any jurisdiction in the matter.

Kurtz, editor of FREE INQUIRY, had argued that "nontheists and humanists should have as much right to open the sessions of the legislative branches of government as theists do. Why shouldn't other viewpoints be given this honor? In a pluralistic society like ours, such discrimination in favor of a religious outlook is unfair."

CODESH has appealed the case to the United States Supreme Court.

Popoff Bankrupt

Televangelist Peter Popoff has filed for bankruptcy. The pentecostal minister, whose bogus faith-healing techniques were uncovered by FREE INQUIRY and the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER) last fall, has filed petitions for protection from creditors under Chapter 7 of the federal bankruptcy law. According to his lawyer, William Simon, Popoff and the Peter Popoff Evangelistic Association are trying to fend off 790 creditors. Simon told the *Los Angeles Times* that the bankruptcy was a "classic case of poor business judgment"—not to mention a classic case of getting caught.

Popoff's fortunes began their steep decline when James Randi, an investigator for CSER, played tapes and recordings on "The Tonight Show" of Popoff secretly employing a radio receiver during his faith-healing rallies to get information from his wife, Elizabeth, regarding the names, addresses, and ailments of members of his audience. In our last issue, CSER's David Alexander revealed how Popoff perpetrated a mail fraud by staging a fake break-in at his headquarters and then beseeching the people on his mailing list to pay for the damage.

What's next for Popoff? "We've driven him out of the public eye, but he's been crawling back into the radio," says Alexander. "He's narrowed his mailing list down to 20,000 or so people, hard-core 'Popoffites,' people who will believe anything that Popoff says, who are incapable of analyzing him in a rational light, and who will continue to send him money."

Secular Humanist Den Leader Dismissed

Ken Saladin, a professor of biology at Georgia College, became a den leader for Cub Scout Pack 322 when his son joined the pack this September. His tenure was cut short, however, by the pack's parent organization, the Boy Scouts of American (BSA). Reason: Saladin, a self-professed secular humanist, balked at signing a statement of religious principle required of Scout leaders. According to the spokesman for BSA, "In matters of religion the only person we cannot register is an avowed atheist." Saladin is considering taking legal action against the Boy Scouts.

The statement that Saladin did not sign reads, "The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God."

Responds Saladin: "I believe that any meaningful criteria or definition of God is purely an invention of the human mind that satisfies a lot of spiritual and emotional and moral needs for people who believe it." A secular humanist, he says, is "one who trusts the powers of human kindness and intelligence to solve the many problems of human existence."

BSA contends that it has the right, as a private organization, to bar atheists. Saladin disagrees. "The BSA operates," he says "under a charter granted by Congress in 1916. This alone should be reason enough why it must be religiously impartial in its service delivery and membership criteria. BSA's discrimination would seem to violate its charter and the laws governing federal corporations. By its own admission, BSA receives direct federal funding, and it is also among a few charities for whom federal employees are given paid leave to raise funds. And, unless things have changed since I was a Boy Scout, the titular commander-in-chief of BSA is the president of the United States."

The Georgia professor has not received much local support. The area newspaper, the Macon *Telegraph and News,* said in an editorial that "we all might hope (or pray) that [the BSA] doesn't water down its principles further." The BSA, it reads, "is not an entity of government; membership is not a constitutional right."

But, Saladin asks, "just where would Scouting be without the PTA, without United Way, without government meeting facilities, without federal funds, without its congressional charter, without public school teachers to recruit for them? I suppose it could exist, but I can tell you it would not be the organization it is today, with 1.5 million Cub Scouts and 500,000 adult leaders."

The Cost of Belief

For a tour designed to focus attention on America's poor, the pope's September trip sure was expensive. The total price tag for American dioceses and various public agencies came to more than $32 million—or about $133,000 an hour. About $20 million was supplied by Catholic dioceses and $12 million by local, state, and federal agencies who took care of security, cleanup, and transportation. The total price, however, may never be known. Costs to employers who let people off from work, news organizations that dispatched large news teams, and police departments that mobilized their entire forces (many for overtime pay) haven't, and probably can't, be completely tallied.

Archdiocese Protects Itself

Wall Street's "Black Mondays" have no

doubt encouraged investors not to get caught with their pants down. And, even though it presumably receives divine guidance in financial matters, the Archdiocese of Miami must have decided to play it safe, too. Why else would it go against Roman Catholic teachings on birth control and, according to its own records, purchase stocks in companies that manufacture contraceptives? Said the Reverend John Vaughan, financial administrator for the archdiocese, "Obviously something slipped through here." To which we respond: They only work if you use them.

Vote on the Messiah

A group of 125 Roman Catholic, Protestant, and non-Christian Bible scholars recently decided by secret ballot that Jesus did not publicly proclaim himself the messiah. The vote, taken at a meeting at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, in October, "is not a final take on what Jesus said," noted a seminary representative, but it does reflect "a theory of uncertainty." Biblical passages in which Jesus proclaims that "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will . . . receive everlasting life" (John 11:25) were added by the early church, scholars said.

Falwell Named Top Panhandler

Nobody begs for it more than the Reverend Jerry Falwell. According to a study conducted by *The Freedom Writer,* a nonprofit educational and research organization dedicated to the preservation of First Amendment freedoms and the separation of church and state, Falwell spends more television-broadcast time raising money than any other televangelist. Falwell, the study said, spends an average of 45 percent, or more than twenty-six minutes of his "Old Time Gospel Hour," pitching for funds. Ora. oerts came in a distant second, with appeals for funds averaging 15 percent of his show; Jimmy Swaggart, with 10 percent, placed third.

Georgia Fundamentalists' Tactics Backfire

According to fundamentalist leader Lee Roberts, Mercer University had become a den of debauchery and heresy. Mercer, a Baptist-affiliated university with approximately six thousand students—located in Savannah, Georgia—became the object of attack when a state-wide fundamentalist group led by Roberts and others decided that the university president, Dr. R. Kirby Godsey, held questionable theological views; the group was also enraged by the fact that two scantily clad Mercer co-eds popped up in *Playboy* magazine. But the 4800 delegates that met at a Baptist state convention in November were offended by the viciousness of Roberts's attacks, and they rejected the fundamentalist plan to kick the moderates out of the 154-year-old college. Dr. Godsey told the *New York Times,* "This is the first major defeat of the political fundamentalists, who have never lost a motion in the national convention in ten years. They had waged a major assault in Georgia and expected to intimidate people."

God and Politics on Public Television

In an extraordinary three-part series broadcast on public television this December, journalist Bill Moyers examined how religious beliefs are shaping political events both at home and abroad. The series, called "Moyers: God and Politics," shows how "religion has always played a major role in American life," says Moyers. "Nevertheless, the recent press attention to religion and its relationship to politics has a superficial quality to it, as if this were one more passing fad on the surface of life."

Producers for the third installment of the series, which examines the Christian Reconstruction movement, consulted FREE INQUIRY staff. Christian Reconstructionism is a potent, grass-roots movement that urges believers to become politically active in order to spread a world-view where the Bible is the basis for all government, laws, and economic systems. "Americans generally have heard little of this movement so far," says Moyers, "but they will hear much in the years to come. These new 'Christian soldiers' have enlisted for a long campaign."

Friendship Centers Listed

Secular Humanist Friendship Centers are continuing to be formed throughout the country. For further details, contact Tim Madigan or Robert Basil, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215, (716) 834-2921.

LOS ANGELES, CA
Victoria & Patrick Martin
6611 Princeton Ave., #530
Moorpark, CA 93021

PHILADELPHIA, PA
Bill Sullivan
401 Edgewater Ave. Box 15
Westville, NJ 08093

SAN MATEO, CA
Bob Denzell
1345 De Soto Ave.
Burlingame, CA 94010

WESTERN NEW YORK
Tim Madigan and Keith Randolph
P.O. Box 5
Buffalo, NY 14215

SAN FRANCISCO, CA
Jim Dahlgren
2023 20th Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94116

CENTRAL NEW YORK
Bert Pooth
Box 59, University Finance St.
Syracuse, NY 13229-0059

MIAMI, FL
Irving Leibowitz
5009 Arthur St.
Hollywood, FL 33021

EASTERN NEW YORK
Hugh McVeigh
122 Spring St.
Albany, NY 12203

ORLANDO, FL
Andree Spuhler
640 Park Ave.
Winter Park, FL 32789

SEATTLE, WA
Peter DeGrace
1020 Greenwood Blvd. S.W.
Issaquah, WA 98027

CHICAGO, IL
Ralph Blasko & Jim Zaluba
807 Madison St., Suite 103
Oak Park, IL 60302

NASHVILLE AND CHATTANOOGA, TN
Leon Felkins
Route 3, Box 187
Tullahoma, TN 37388

Many other groups are now being formed and will be listed in future issues.

FREE INQUIRY is also sponsoring Secular Sobriety Groups, nonreligiously oriented support groups for recovering alcoholics. SSG has recently been endorsed by the Los Angeles Court System, which will refer people to the program through court-mandated sentencing when an individual voices an objection to the religious basis of other programs. For information on the SSG nearest you, contact Jim Christopher, Secular Sobriety Groups, Box 15781, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5781. •

Saving the House of Ingersoll

Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899) was America's leading freethinker in the nineteenth century. According to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "future historians will rank him as one of its heroes." Ingersoll was also considered to be the greatest orator of his day, and his defense of skepticism had a profound effect on all who heard his eloquent speeches or read his works, which included *Some Mistakes of Moses, Why I Am an Agnostic,* and *The Great Infidels.* "I doubt America has anything quite equal" to him, wrote Mark Twain. Concurred Walt Whitman: "Ingersoll is a man whose importance cannot be overfigured."

Yet, despite his importance, the twentieth century's memory of Ingersoll has dimmed. So, in order to commemorate him, FREE INQUIRY has established "The Robert G. Ingersoll Memorial Committee." The first task of the committee has been to purchase the house in which Ingersoll was born, located in Dresden, New York—about sixty miles south of Syracuse. We are pleased to announce that the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH) was able to raise some money and borrow the rest to do so. The Committee's second task is to restore the house to its original condition. Indeed, the house is in a state of serious disrepair; and, unless it can be fully restored within two years, according to the deed the town will tear the house down. The necessary refurbishing will cost approximately $20,000. Once the house is refurbished, the committee will begin furnishing it with the memorabilia of the period, including many of Ingersoll's personal effects.

The committee's long-range goals: to create a free-thought library, museum, and conference center.

It is with a sincere sense of urgency that we appeal to you as humanists and free thinkers to help found and support this nation's very first free-thought memorial. All contributors will receive a unique, specially printed parchment copy of Robert Ingersoll's "Vow" and have their name inscribed in a donor's log that will be permanently placed in the Ingersoll home. Donors of $500 or more will have their names inscribed on a bronze plaque, which will be hung in the front foyer.

Your (tax-exempt) gifts will be gratefully received at: The Robert G. Ingersoll Memorial Committee, Box 5, Buffalo, New York 14215-0005. •

Ingersoll's Vow

When I became convinced that the Universe is natural—that all the ghosts and gods are myths, there entered into my brain, into my soul, into every drop of my blood, the sense, the feeling, the joy of freedom. The walls of my prison crumbled and fell, the dungeon was flooded with light, and all the bolts, and bars, and manacles became dust. I was no longer a servant, a serf, or a slave. There was for me no master in all the wide world—not even in infinite space. I was free—free to think, to express my thoughts—free to live to my own ideal—free to live for myself and those I loved—free to use all my faculties, all my senses—free to spread imagination's wings—free to investigate, to guess and dream and hope—free to judge and determine for myself—free to reject all ignorant and cruel creeds, all the "inspired" books that savages have produced, and all the barbarous legends of the past—free from popes and priests—free from all the "called" and "set apart"—free from sanctified mistakes and holy lies—free from the fear of eternal pain—free from the winged monsters of the night—free from devils, ghosts, and gods. For the first time I was free. There were no prohibited places in all the realms of thought—no air, no space, where fancy could not spread her painted wings—no chains for my limbs—no lashes for my back—no fires for my flesh—no master's frown or threat—no following another's steps—no need to bow, or cringe, or crawl, or utter lying words. I was free. I stood erect and fearlessly, joyously, faced all worlds.

And then my heart was filled with gratitude, with thankfulness, and went out in love to all the heroes, the thinkers who gave their lives for the liberty of hand and brain—for the freedom of labor and thought—to those who fell on the fierce fields of war, to those who died in dungeons bound with chains—to those who proudly mounted scaffold's stairs—to those whose bones were crushed, whose flesh was scarred and torn—to those by fire consumed—to all the wise, the good, the brave of every land, whose thoughts and deeds have given freedom to the sons of men. And then I vowed to grasp the torch that they had held, and hold it high, that light might conquer darkness still. •

Shawn and Madonna

Last December a "miracle" astonished the congregation of a small Greek Orthodox church in Chicago, Illinois: an icon depicting the Virgin Mary spontaneously began weeping what seemed to be real human tears. The event touched off a national media stir that encouraged an estimated three hundred thousand people to visit the tiny church. Church officials maintained that the mysterious tears were "a miraculous sign" and suggested that the Madonna was crying "for the moral decay and the spiritual bankruptcy of our modern American society."

Those and other similar claims have now been challenged by a group of scientific researchers who say they have created their own weeping icon out of a painted copy of the Mona Lisa.

In announcing the creation of this weeping icon at FREE INQUIRY's sixth annual conference, at American University in Washington, D.C., the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER) has offered a more mundane hypothesis: The icon in Chicago was probably a sham. "Our icon has been created by completely natural means," states Shawn Carlson, creator of the icon and a physicist at University of California's Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory who is a fellow of CSER, "and we believe it does everything the icon in Chicago does. We are not saying that the Chicago icon is definitely a fake. One might suppose, however, that a bona fide sign from God would not be so easily duplicated by natural means."

Chicago has seen more than one weeping Madonna. In 1984, St. John of God Catholic Church, on the city's south side, became the focus of an official church inquiry when a statue of Mary was was reported to have wept tears. The Catholic church, which has endorsed as miraculous appearances of Mary at Lourdes and Fatima, never endorsed the Chicago statue.

In an official statement by the Greek Orthodox church regarding this new weeping icon, church leaders declared that weeping

Shawn Carlson and his invention.

icons are not "rationally explainable." The weeping icon "needs no explanation, whether scientific or natural," the statement reads. "The believers do not ask the *how*, but the *why*." Archbishop Iakovos, spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox church for the Western Hemisphere, has refused to order an examination of the icon, saying that he "accepts this miracle as a sign asking those who have strayed from the church to return." To question the authenticity of the icon, says Iakovos, is to blaspheme Christ.

Carlson disagrees. "Surely Jesus would not want his followers to believe in a false miracle," he argues. "The only way to know whether the icon is a real miracle is to examine it. A real sign from God would withstand scrutiny."

Michael Crowley, president of the Midwest Committee for Rational Inquiry, a Chicago-based group that investigates paranormal claims, is particularly concerned about the Greek Orthodox church's reluctance to permit any examination. "Archbishop Iakovos did not even respond to our request to discuss the possibility of scientific tests," Crowley says. This refusal, suggests Crowley, might indicate that church officials themselves have doubts regarding the icon's authenticity.

Of the many crying and bleeding icons that have turned up all over the world in the past several hundred years, only a few have been scientifically examined, notes Carlson, and those few have been exposed as frauds. In 1985, for example, a Catholic railroad worker from Quebec, Canada, claimed that his personal two-foot-tall statue of the Virgin Mary spontaneously began to weep and bleed during the festival of the Immaculate Conception. In the ensuing month, thousands of pilgrims braved subzero weather to pray and leave financial offerings before the statue. However, a news team eventually succeeded in scraping a sample of the residue drom the statue's face; it was revealed that the "blood and tears" were in fact pork drippings mixed with the blood of the statue's owner.

Who is responsible for creating Chicago's icon? "Probably one or two well-meaning individuals who want to bolster people's religious faith," says Carlson, who adds that "we do not wish to discredit religion or insult anyone's faith. But we do want to prevent innocent people from having their faith in God exploited by the purveyors of false miracles."

"We are skeptics, not cynics," says Carlson of CSER, which is sponsored by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH). "If miracles happen we want to know about them. And that means that mysterious occurrences must be carefully examined to exclude natural explanations. After years of investigating, CSER is still searching for an actual miracle."

Carlson says he chose the Mona Lisa as his icon because he wanted to avoid offending religious believers. "I didn't want an image that was either too sacred or too secular. The Mona Lisa seemed like the perfect choice."

Although Carlson declines to reveal how he made his icon weep—he intends to patent his method and market crying icons as a novelty—he claims that it is a quick and easy procedure that could have been used hundreds of years ago.—*Eds.*

Re-broadcasting the True Pat Robertson

Edmund D. Cohen

Since March 1987, Gerry Straub and I have been working together to make the media—and through them, the public—aware of the full extent of Pat Robertson's extremist proclivities. Gerry was one of Robertson's principal lieutenants at the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) and a producer of "The 700 Club" before becoming disenchanted. (See his *Salvation for Sale: An Inside View of Pat Robertson's Organization,* published by Prometheus Books and excerpted in FI, Summer 1986.) I had conducted a systematic monitoring and taping of Robertson's utterances on television, beginning in October 1984. As CBN no longer honors journalists' requests for access to tape of Robertson, I seem to have become a main source for the media of accurate quotations from him.

Gerry and I succeeded in getting journalists to ask Robertson about a statement he made on the January 11, 1985 "700 Club" to the effect that only ultra-religious Christians and Jews are qualified to have the "reign" of government. Robertson had adamantly denied making any such statement. But in *Time* (October 19, 1987, p. 21) Robertson suffered a major embarrassment when he was confronted with an audiotape of that broadcast—provided by Gerry and me. (See also *Time,* September 28, 1987, pp. 22–23, and Gerry's letter to the editor in response, October 26, 1987, p. 12.) Gerry and I were on WWOR's "People Are Talking" in metropolitan New York after these items appeared, and our videotape of the offending comment was aired on that show. Robertson's supporters in the studio audience attempted to shout us down and, after seeing the videotape, concluded that the reports of Robertson's denials must have been secular humanist lies.

Little by little, we are overcoming the benign public-relations image that Robertson so expertly affects. Here is a preview of the ugly picture we hope will be seen by all those having an opportunity to vote for Robertson in a primary or caucus:

In the late 1970s, Robertson was obsessed with an end-of-the-world scenario involving ten Common Market nations ruled by a charismatic leader who would turn out to be the antichrist in disguise. He became convinced that the battle of Armageddon, consisting of Russia invading Israel but being miraculously demolished by the Israel Defense Forces, would take place in 1982. Gerry was then involved in earnest plans for CBN to televise the Second Coming. Robertson and his CBN staff imagined that Christ would return and preside for a thousand years over the only *right* kind of government—a theocracy. Robertson's presidential aspirations came in the wake of his disappointment that this prophecy went unfulfilled.

Pat Robertson

Recent statements I have videotaped indicate that Robertson still believes that the world will end in a cataclysm where the forces of evil will be pitted against the forces of good. For Robertson, the forces of evil consist of Communism, socialism, one-worldism, secular humanism, liberalism, false religions (i.e., all those other than Christianity and Orthodox Judaism), feminism, and homosexuality, all of which conspire malignantly against God's people. On the campaign trail, he calls again and again for the "eradication of Communism." Yet he says it so smoothly that his followers never think to ask what that "eradication" might really entail.

The most extreme of Robertson's utterances that we hope to get widely aired (ones that do not require long explanations of his convoluted theology to bring out their obscene implications) are:

1. His recommendation that there be special Christian courts to rule on the validity of "spirit-filled" Christians' claims that direct instructions from God induced them to break the law. If the Christian judges rule that the message from God was authentic, the accused will become immune from prosecution for illegal acts committed in obedience to that message.

2. His proposal that there be prophetic Christian police authorized to arrest those whom God says will commit crimes in the future. It seems that in Robertson's utopia divine revelations can be used against dissidents much as psychiatric diagnoses are used in the Soviet Union—or as "spectral evidence" was used in the Salem Witch Trials.

Edmund D. Cohen

3. Robertson's stated belief that sometimes God, through a prophet, instructs his chosen people to exterminate an unregenerate human group completely, to "kill them all," in order to stop that group from procreating additional generations who would ultimately overpopulate Hell. Remember, Robertson proclaims himself a prophet, receiving and obeying divine marching orders just as Moses did. Coming from him, such a statement is no mere exercise in theoretical theology.

The "bottom line" of all this? Robertson's beliefs and past statements necessarily imply that he could delude himself that God has instructed him to start a nuclear war in order to bring about the events described in 2 Peter 3:10–13. Just as readily, he could delude himself into thinking that God has instructed him to carry out exterminations of vulnerable minorities. Can anybody imagine worse proclivities than these for a potential president of the United States? •

A former born-again Christian, Edmund D. Cohen is the author of The Mind of the Bible Believer *(Prometheus).*

Secular Humanism in American Political Culture

Adolf Grünbaum

All of us have heard it said that a liberal college education widens our intellectual horizons and makes a valuable contribution to good citizenship in our country. Alas, recently the coin of public discourse has been debased by attacks on liberal education, featuring ideological demagoguery and coercive political attempts at philosophical intimidation. We are told that much of our educational system instills the doctrine of secular humanism—and that this outlook on the world is responsible for evils ranging from drug addiction and smut in the media to the repressiveness of Soviet society.

The strident voices that level this demonstrably untutored and shallow moral indictment of secular humanism are not confined to the televangelists, whose judgmental penchant for moral self-righteousness has recently boomeranged. Regrettably, the sloganeering detractors also include high public officials like the fundamentalist Senator Jesse Helms. And, yes, they can claim support from the president of the United States, who decries godlessness more vaguely but who has seen fit to say misleadingly that the theory of evolution, in contrast to the book of Genesis, is "just" a theory. Chiming in with Reagan, William J. Bennett, his Secretary of Education, opined last year that "religion promotes tolerance" and that, in the public schools, "neutrality to religion turned out to bring with it a neutrality to those values that issue from religion."[1] Others maintain that secular humanism is *itself* a religion after all, but one that we must shun like the plague.

Just what is it about secular humanism that is so pernicious? Is it justified, or even workable, for our public officials to try to intimidate secular humanists by linking good citizenship to religious belief?

The Core of Secular Humanism

For a concise statement of the core of secular humanism, one can do no better than to turn to Albert Einstein's essay on "Science and Religion," which he delivered in 1941 at a Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion.

Speaking of "the actual content of the historical religions," Einstein characterized their "concept of God" this way:

> During the youthful period of mankind's spiritual evolution, human fantasy created gods in man's own image, who, by the operations of their will were supposed to determine, or at any rate to influence, the phenomenal world. Man sought to alter the disposition of these gods in his own favor by means of magic and prayer. The idea of God in the religions taught at present is a sublimation of that old conception of the gods. Its anthropomorphic [wish-inspired] character is shown, for instance, by the fact that men appeal to the Divine Being in prayers and plead for the fulfillment of their wishes.
>
> Nobody, certainly, will deny that the idea of the existence of an omnipotent just and omnibeneficent personal God is able to accord men solace, help, and guidance; also, by virtue of its simplicity the concept is accessible to the most undeveloped mind. But, on the other hand, there are decisive weaknesses attached to this idea in itself, which have been painfully felt since the beginning of history. . . .
>
> The main source of the present-day conflicts between the spheres of religion and science lies in this concept of a personal God.[2]

In Einstein's view, one of the decisive weaknesses of the concept of God is that a supposedly omnibenevolent God permits the existence of a vast amount of cruelty and evil in this world. Let me point out that much of this evil is *not* man-made at all; its existence cannot be explained away as being the result of human abuse of God's gift of free will. For example, thousands of animals die slow, agonizing, and painful deaths in forests from diseases not induced by humans, and they do not even have palliative relief from our analgesics. And much of our own biological suffering is produced by causes *other than* our own decisions or actions. Thus, *this* sort of evidence against God's benevolence cannot be neutralized even by the grotesque sort of reasoning used by the ultra-orthodox Rabbi Teitelbaum in his lame effort to reconcile the Nazi Holocaust with divine omnibenevolence [see box].

Einstein goes on to elaborate his objections to the traditional concept of God:

> The more a man is imbued with the ordered regularity of all events, the firmer becomes his conviction that there is no room left by the side of this ordered regularity for causes of a different nature. For him neither the rule of human nor the rule of divine will exists as an independent cause of natural events. To be sure, the doctrine of a personal God interfering with natural events could never be refuted, in the real sense, by science, for this doctrine can always take refuge in those domains in which scientific knowledge has not yet been able to set foot.

Adolf Grünbaum is the Andrew Mellon Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. His critique of Freud, The Foundations of Psychoanalysis, *was extensively debated in* FI, *Fall 1985. This article is based on his President's Address to Phi Beta Kappa, University of Pittsburgh, May 7, 1987.*

> But I am persuaded that such behavior on the part of the representatives of religion would not only be unworthy but also fatal. For a doctrine which is able to maintain itself not in clear light, but only in the dark, will of necessity lose its effect on mankind, with incalculable harm to human progress. In their struggle for the ethical good, teachers of religion must have the stature to give up the doctrine of a personal God, that is, give up that source of fear and hope which in the past placed such vast power in the hands of priests. In their labors they will have to avail themselves of those forces which are capable of cultivating the Good, the True, and the Beautiful in humanity itself. This is, to be sure, a more difficult but an incomparably more worthy task.[3]

Let me illustrate Einstein's *denial* of "divine will . . . as an independent cause of natural events." When President Reagan escaped permanent injury from Hinckley's bullets, Nancy Reagan expressed her conviction that God had been on her husband's shoulder during the shooting, deflecting the bullet from all of his vital organs. But her proposed explanation raises, of course, an urgent question: What was God doing while another bullet devastated the brain of Reagan's poor press secretary, Jim Brady? Is Mrs. Reagan suggesting that Brady got what God thought he deserved? Isn't it more reasonable, and compassionate, to hold that, if there is a God, he had nothing to do with the trajectories of any of Hinckley's bullets?

Einstein concludes his essay by saying:

> The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge.[4]

My quotations from Einstein can serve as a kind of secular humanist manifesto in at least three major respects: He takes an explicit stand in the debate between atheism and theism by asserting that man created the idea of God as a figment of his own imagination; he urges us to locate the meaning of our existence within human life itself rather than in the fulfillment of some inscrutable cosmic purpose dictated by divine will; and he declares that man himself has the responsibility for making moral discriminations between good and evil, between right and wrong.

In its traditional form, theism asserts the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent creator who is accessible to personal communion with us. This divine being is to be respected, loved, and feared. In fact, compliance with His purported ethical demands normally holds out the promise of heaven, though there have been theists who did not believe in personal immortality. Clearly, to *deny* the existence-claim made by theism is to assert a theism. Thus understood, Einstein's version of secular humanism, as well as those of the philosophers Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Bertrand Russell, for example, are instances of atheism.

It is vital to appreciate that, like any other doctrine, either theism or atheism can be asserted with varying degrees of conviction. Thus, either of them might be held, more-or-less tentatively, as the best working hypothesis. Alternatively, either may be held dogmatically, with a degree of certainty characteristic of fanaticism. However, scientifically literate secular humanists know all too well that even a hypothesis enjoying much evidential support *may* nonetheless still be false. When secular humanists endorse atheism, they do so in the sense of regarding it as the most reasonable hypothesis in the light of the currently available evidence. As Einstein noted, it is not necessary to produce a knock-down, irrevocably conclusive *disproof* of the existence of God in order to reject belief in theism. Instead, such *disbelief* is reasonable if the evidence *for* theism is weak or poor, and there is impressive evidence against it, such as the problem of evil.

Let me point out that in contexts not related to religion, we can likewise have excellent reasons to disbelieve a certain hypothesis, even when we haven't conclusively disproved it. And we are surely not required to accept a hypothesis merely because it has not been utterly disproved.

Einstein only barely touched on the sources of theism's *psychological* appeal. But other secular humanists—such as Sigmund Freud, who was a self-declared atheist—have eloquently recognized the immensely powerful psychological attraction that many people feel for the consolations and wish-fulfillments provided by belief in God. Freud eloquently describes this appeal:

> . . . the terrifying impression of helplessness in childhood aroused the need for protection—for protection through love—which was provided by the father; and the recognition that this helplessness lasts throughout life made it necessary to cling to the existence of a father, but this time a more powerful one. Thus the benevolent rule of a divine Providence allays our fear of the dangers of life; the establishment of a moral world-order ensures the fulfillment of the demands of justice, which have so often remained unfulfilled in human civilization; and prolongation of earthly existence in a future life provides the local and temporal framework in which these wish-fulfillments shall take place. Answers to the riddles that tempt the curiosity of man, such as how the universe began or what the relation is between body and mind, are developed in conformity with the underlying assumptions of this system.[5]

The protector, creator, *and* lawgiver are all rolled into one. No wonder, then, that religious systems can secure the acquiescence of their believers, if they teach that the will of God is mysterious or inscrutable and that some religious tenets transcend human understanding. In fact, Freud contends repeatedly that theism psychologically *infantilizes* adults by reinforcing the childish residues in their psyches.[6]

Freud sums up as follows:

> Religion is an attempt to master the sensory world in which we are situated by means of the wishful world which we have developed within us as a result of biological and psychological necessities. But religion cannot achieve this. Its doctrines bear the imprint of the times in which they arose, the ignorant times of the childhood of humanity. Its consolations deserve no trust. Experience teaches us that the world is no nursery. The ethical demands on which religion seeks to lay stress need, rather, to be given another basis; for they are indispensable to human society and it is dangerous to link obedience to them with religious faith.[7]

God and the Holocaust

The problem of evil has perennially bedeviled those who believe in the governance of the world by a just, or even omnibenevolent, God. No wonder, therefore, that the influential twentieth-century Jewish theologian Martin Buber saw the Nazi holocaust as a particularly acute challenge to the doctrine of divine justice.

Buber felt forced to conclude that God temporarily goes into eclipse. But just why a benevolent God would go into eclipse to accommodate the likes of Adolf Hitler, Buber could not explain. After all, going into such an eclipse would seem to be a case of morally irresponsible absenteeism on God's part. Indeed, if Buber is to be believed, and if one looks at the history of the societies that have embraced theism in one form or another, it is difficult to find any time at all when God was not at least partially in eclipse.

Buber's theodicy is just lame and frivolous. More recent apologetics for the Holocaust from some Jewish religious quarters have been nothing less than obscene. In a recent article in the London *Times* (May 9, 1987), Sir Immanuel Jakobovitz, the Chief Orthodox Rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth, asserted that the Nazi holocaust was divine punishment for the apostasy of the German Jews who founded assimilationist Reform Judaism. "This idol of individual assimilation," he wrote "exploded in the very country in which it was invented, to be eventually melted down and incinerated in the crematoria of Auschwitz."

Now, when the S.S.-men who implemented the "final solution" have their reunions, they can say—on the authority of none other than the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom—that they were merely the instruments of the God of Moses. Indeed, if Rabbi Jakobovitz is to be believed, the wrath of God is so *indiscriminate* that it prompted the Nazis to incinerate devoutly orthodox Jews from all over Central Europe, no less than the supposedly wicked reform Jews of Germany. Moreover, the vindictiveness of this God is such that the punishment for doctrinal deviance, even *within* a Mosaic theistic framework, had to be nothing short of live incineration, rather than some lesser reversible misfortune. Far from being just, a God who indiscriminately assigns wholesale lethal punishment and allows babies to be killed in front of their mothers by S.S.-guards is a sadistic, satanic monster deserving of cosmic loathing rather than worship and love.

Rabbi Jakobovitz is not alone in his view that the Holocaust was divinely sanctioned. As reported in a recent lecture by the noted Israeli scholar Amos Funkenstein, the ultra-orthodox Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum—who lives in Jerusalem but regards the Jewish secular state and government in Israel as sinful—sees the Holocaust as God's punishment for the Zionist founding of a Jewish state *in advance* of the promised arrival of the purported new Messiah. Evidently, Rabbi Teitelbaum also regards God's justice as morally indiscriminate. After all, most of the Jews who perished in the crematoria were not even Zionists, let alone participating citizens of the state of Israel. And it seems to have been lost on both of the rabbis that the principle of wholesale, *collective* guilt and justice is invoked by Islamic terrorists who attack Israeli citizens no less than by themselves.

In his article, "Hook Is Mired in Secular Confusion," (FI, Fall 1987), Rabbi Y. D. Homnick goes Buber, Jakobovitz, and Teitelbaum one better in his discernment of the hand of God, which he deems patent in the Holocaust. Chiding Sidney Hook for his benighted vision, he claims that "Yes, without a doubt, the guidance of history by G-d is perceptible even to our limited gaze. The sense of justice . . . is palpable. . . . Especially is the Holocaust a proof of G-d's justice, coming as a climax of a century in which the vast majority of Jews, after thousands of years of loyalty in exile, decided to cast off the yoke of the Torah." It will be noted that, in his veritable paean to divine retribution, Homnick follows orthodox Jewish practice of showing reverence by omitting the letter "o" in the spelling of "God." In so doing, he displays the inveterate semantic confusion between a *name* and its *object*, believing that the use of the full name somehow detracts from the holiness of the object. This confusion springs from the old belief in word-magic familiar from the study of savages. —*Adolf Grünbaum*

As we know, the ethical demands of different religious systems tend to contradict each other. Indeed, even within the same denomination there can be clashes over basic moral doctrine. Hence Freud's reference to "the" ethical demands made by religion has to be construed as merely generic. By the same token, in advocating an alternative secular foundation for such demands, he means only that some ethical rules are essential to a civilized society. Freud surely did not intend that the secular humanist will vindicate and incorporate moral directives merely because they had been issued under religious auspices. On the contrary, the secularist would pick and choose among the latter, rejecting a fair number of them, of course.

How can Einstein, Freud, and other secular humanists *logically* dispense with a theological basis for ethical rules of conduct? This very question, I claim, rests on an unexamined assumption—that an articulated system of rights and wrongs, *specific enough to give us concrete moral guidance for our actions,* can be deduced from divine omnibenevolence and revelation. I *deny* just this assumption. In fact, as I shall try to argue, theism itself is morally sterile.

To make my case, let me first distinguish between the following two very different questions:

1. Do the Ten Commandments, the moral injunctions of the New Testament, or the ethics of the Koran logically follow from the hypothesis that there is an omnibenevolent God who revealed Himself to humans?

2. Can the clergy of some denomination simply tack on particular ethical directives to a given theological hypothesis, with a view to then claiming divine sanction for these injunctions?

The first of these two questions asks about the *logical deducibility* of a concrete ethical system from the pertinent theological existence-claim. But the second query leaves such deducibility wholly aside and pertains to connecting an idea of God to a set of ethical imperatives that is gotten from elsewhere. Obviously, it is feasible to conjoin an independently obtained

ethics with theism. Equally obviously, in the event of such mere tacking on, the specific ethical injunctions are not derived from theism, although they are issued under clerical auspices. Thus, as we know, a great variety of radically incompatible moral imperatives can be and have been sanctioned by avowedly theistic religious institutions.

But what of the logical derivability of ethics from theism, which is asserted by those who claim that belief in God and revelation not only yields an ethical system but is even an indispensable foundation for it? Let us grant, just for argument's sake, that the notion of divine omnibenevolence is itself unproblematic. Assuming such omnibenevolence on God's part, it presumably follows that all divinely ordained conduct is morally right. But here is the crucial question: Which particular conduct is divinely ordained? If the reply be that the relevant moral directives are supplied by revelation, then I ask: Within Christendom, or within theism in general, which one of the conflicting purported revelations is supposed to supply us with concrete ethical rules? It emerges that the concepts of divine omnibenevolence and revelation are altogether unhelpful with regard to the *specific* moral issues over which we agonize.

It is no wonder that the Judeo-Christian theology to which many of our public officials claim allegiance has been invoked as a sanction for diverse, and even incompatible, ethical doctrines, such as the divine right of kings; the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; black slavery; "Deutschland über alles"; the social Darwinism of Spencer; and socialism. For example, in a very recent issue of the *New Republic,* Crocker Coulson challenged neoconservative Christians like Catholic theologian Michael Novak to explain how they reconcile their free market philosophy with the following New Testament injunctions[8]:

> No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. [Matthew 6:24]

> If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. [Matthew 19:21]

> Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. [Luke 6:24-5]

Precisely such passages from scripture have been invoked since the 1960s by those Catholic priests in Latin America who espouse the neo-Marxist "liberation theology." As Coulson points out, Latin America is home to almost half of the world's Roman Catholics, and, despite Vatican objections, liberation theology "has become the accepted creed of the Church hierarchy in several countries," having established tens of thousands of communities among the peasantry and urban poor.[9] Launched at the 1968 Bishops Conference in Medellin, Columbia, liberation theology described Latin American capitalism as a "situation of sin" and has been used to justify diverse political activities, ranging from nonviolent protest to agrarian reform and armed revolution.

The enormous moral ambiguity of religious belief can be illustrated by innumerable other examples. Thus, some religious sects in India would have us abstain from the surgical excision of cancerous growths in man, and Christian Scientists in this country reach somewhat similar conclusions from rather different premises. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, endorse the medical prevention of death but condemn interference with nature in the form of artificial birth control, a position not shared by leading Protestant and Jewish clergymen. Perhaps one could reply that this ambiguity of practice is resolved by a uniformity of intention: As long as one tries to serve God, one's act cannot be immoral. But both Mahatma Gandhi and Adolf Hitler saw themselves as serving God. And divine providence was as frequent a feature of Hitler's speeches as it is of Ronald Reagan's. Indeed, Hitler's invocation of divine providence illustrates anew that religion can be the last refuge of the scoundrel. By the same token, belief in God leaves us in the dark whether to share or abhor, for example, the Reverend Jerry Falwell's and Rabbi Meir Kahane's claim that a nuclear Armageddon is part of God's just and loving plan for us. From Rabbi Kahane we learn: "The Messiah will come. There will be a resurrection of the dead—all the things that Jews believed in before they got so damn sophisticated." In a fairly recent "Nightline" program, Jerry Falwell rejected astrophysical findings regarding the formation of the stars' heavier chemical elements because they conflicted with the biblical tenet of man's fall.

To the likes of Falwell and Kahane, as well as to the patrons of their theology in high places, secular humanists reply: "The genie of critical thought is out of the bottle; not even all the president's men and all of his horses will ever succeed in putting it back again! No demagogue will be able to turn the clock back to the dark ages."

When, through history, theology has attempted to find prescriptions, down-to-earth aims and thought were typically every bit as decisive as they have been in the reflections of secular ethicists who deny theism. The perplexity of moral problems is not at all lessened by the theological superstructure, which itself leaves us in an ethical quandry. That this superstructure is at best logically superfluous for ethics, or is simply unavailing, emerges further from the failure of divine omnibenevolence to answer a key question put by Socrates in Plato's *Euthyphro:* Is the conduct approved by the gods right because it is *intrinsically* good, or is it right *merely* because it pleases the gods to command it? If God enjoins us to do what is just or good *in its own right,* then ethical rules do not depend for their validity on divine command. But if conduct is good *merely* because God enjoins it, then we are again faced with the cacophony of conflicting revelations—and, within denominations, conflicting interpretations regarding the revelations' ethical meaning.

These difficulties teach a cardinal lesson: Even if a person attempts to defer completely to theological authority on moral matters, he or she has no choice but to decide *which* religious authority will be the ethical guide. Try as they may, people cannot abdicate their own responsibility for determining the moral norms of their lives. As Freud stressed, "the world is no nursery." In just this decision-making sense, I contend, man is inescapably the measure of all things, for better or for worse.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn denied this conclusion. Thus, his

famous 1978 commencement address at Harvard University contains the following lament, which he addressed to the West no less than to the Soviet Union:

> There is a disaster which is already very much with us. I am referring to the calamity of an autonomous [despiritualized] and irreligious, humanistic consciousness. It has made man the measure of all things on Earth—imperfect man, who is never free of pride, self-interest, envy, vanity, and dozens of other defects. . . . Is it true that man is above everything? Is there no Superior Spirit above him?

This declaration may sound ingratiatingly modest. Alas, it is morally hollow and theologically question-begging. Which revelation, I must ask Solzhenitsyn, is to supplant man as the measure of all things? The Czarist Russian Orthodox church's? The Ayatollah Khomeini's as enforced by his mullahs? The Dutch Reformed church's, which has legitimated apartheid in South Africa? Or the revelation of Pope John Paul II, who—amid starvation in Africa—is getting support from the native episcopate for the prohibition of artificial birth control?

Solzhenitsyn's charge of moral inadequacy against an irreligious humanistic consciousness is of-a-piece with his rhetorical questions, "Is it true that man is above everything? Is there no Superior Spirit above him?" In our current state of biological evolution, our species may indeed be limited to certain intellectual horizons—much as theoretical physics defies comprehension by dogs. And there just might be extra-solar organisms that do not have to operate within our assumed horizons. But, surely, this assumption that man may not be above everything hardly requires belief in the existence of God.

Solzhenitsyn's jeremiad simply replaces secular man with *clergymen,* who become the moral measure of everything. It would seem that his well-justified loathing of Soviet totalitarianism has prompted him to embrace the outmoded ideals of a chauvinistic Russian theocracy. But atheism, which Solzhenitsyn passionately attacks, is no less compatible with belief in free-enterprise capitalism than with the socioeconomic doctrines of the Swedish welfare state, or with the ideology of Communist China. For instance, the late author Ayn Rand was an advocate of both belligerent atheism *and* unregulated capitalism, scoffing at much of our social welfare legislation as the decadent pampering of the undeserving. Certainly, while all orthodox Marxists are atheists, it does *not* follow that all atheists are Marxists, let alone Soviet-style communists. American politicians who use the phrase "atheistic communism" unscrupulously insinuate that the unacceptable and repugnant features of Soviet governance derive from the atheism of the Politburo.

But, in so doing, they conveniently ignore that the secret police flourished in Russia under the vauntedly theocratic Czarist Romanov dynasty. Indeed, the repressive and egregiously autocratic Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, who was shot by the Bolsheviks, surrendered to extreme theocratic exaltation under the guidance of the notorious monk Rasputin, whom she regarded as God's gift to Russia. One of Rasputin's religious injunctions was "Sin in order that you may obtain forgiveness." This elevating directive was fervently applied at the court. Indeed, it legitimated wanton debauchery and orgies wild enough to make the wife-swapping reportedly practiced by Pentecostal televangelists seem tame indeed.

Yet there are public figures in this country who glibly and reflexively blame the rampancy of pornographic material here on the alleged moral permissiveness of secular humanism and on the absence of prayer in our public schools. In their demagogic fervor, they are not even given pause by the puritanical sexual prudishness of the Soviet government, an institution in which sexual improprieties jeopardize political careers at least as much as avowed religiosity does. Also conveniently ignored is the fact that, in Castro's Cuba, homosexuality—far from being abetted—is inhumanely punished. There are innumerable other facts that refute the purported linkage of secular humanism with various totalitarian evils. We need only recall the warm welcome extended to Hitler in Vienna by the Roman Catholic Cardinal Innitzer, who proclaimed that Austria's incorporation into Nazi Germany was ordained by divine providence. Yet, unencumbered by such evidence, the attacks on secular humanism continue relentlessly.

Coercive political intimidation of secular humanists in this country will neither banish nor invalidate their ideas, any more than Soviet psychiatrists have been able to cow Russian nonconformists into intellectual submission. Nor did Soviet state-sponsored atheism browbeat Mrs. Nikita Krushchev into abandoning her openly declared religious beliefs. Apart from being ineffective, political intimidation of irreligious American citizens can hardly be justified by the fact that President Eisenhower chose to insert the phrase "under God" after the words "one nation" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Have we not all had enough of the shameful history of religious coercion? And are we Americans not sobered by the fact that the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism is deeply hostile to us, even when President Reagan proclaims us to be a God-fearing people, whose secret emissaries arrived with Bible in hand? Is it not time to stop using the term *secular humanist*—and, yes, also the label *atheist*—as scare or code words for conjuring up a scapegoat, whipping boy, or bugaboo?

All too often, the level of public discourse in our country on philosophical issues of national importance is appallingly low. Our republic and our people deserve much better, if only because the received political and religious pieties have alienated many thoughtful citizens from our political processes. If we are really to cope with our problems in this land, and in the world at large, both religious and irreligious people must forsake smug, self-congratulatory claims of superior moral probity.

Notes

1. Quoted in John B. Judis, "Mr. Ed," *New Republic,* April 27, 1987, p. 18.
2. Reprinted in D. J. Bronstein and H. M. Schulweis, eds., *Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1954), pp. 69–70.
3. Ibid., p. 71.
4. Ibid., p. 72.
5. Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Words of Sigmund Freud,* tr. John Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 1927, vol. 21, p. 30.
6. Ibid., 1927, vol. 21, p. 49; 1930, vol. 21, p. 85.
7. Ibid., 1933, vol. 22, p. 168.
8. *New Republic,* May 4, 1987, p. 35.
9. Ibid., p. 32.

Psychic Astronomy

Martin Gardner

Over the centuries thousands of religious cult leaders, seers, psychics, and spirit mediums have favored the public with exotic revelations about astronomy, especially about life on other planets. A huge volume would be needed to survey these revelations, and a bibliography of books alone would run to hundreds of titles. Herewith a small sampling of the more outrageous examples.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), called by Conan Doyle the "first and greatest of modern mediums," began his career in Sweden as a distinguished scientist. In his middle years he began to experience trances during which he talked endlessly with Jesus, angels, devils, and departed human souls—Moses, Saint Paul, Luther, Calvin, popes and kings, and many others. So convinced was he that the Lord had chosen him to be the Bible's infallible interpreter that he dated the Second Coming as having occurred in 1757, the year his vision of the Last Judgment marked the end of the Christian dispensation and the beginning of what he called the New Jerusalem.

The Church of the New Jerusalem, based on Swedenborg's voluminous Latin writings, emerged in England after his death. Among the thousands of people who admired him were such literary lights as Baudelaire, Goethe, Emerson, Strindberg, Balzac, Blake, and the elder Henry James, father of William. (Of Henry's book *The Secret of Swedenborg,* one critic complained that James had *kept it.*) The young Immanuel Kant was so impressed by Swedenborg's alleged remote vision of a great fire in Stockholm that he wrote a treatise about it. The American parapsychologist Joseph B. Rhine called Swedenborg "the pioneer in the work I am doing."

In a small book, *The Earths in the Universe,* Swedenborg described the inhabitants of all the Sun's planets—except, of course, the then-unknown Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto—as well as those of their moons and planets in other solar systems. These visions are many cuts below tenth-rate science fiction. All Swedenborg's extraterrestrials are monotonously humanoid. Most of them worship Jesus, who occasionally visits them.

Mercurians see the Sun as huge, but their climate is moderate. The women are small, beautiful, and wear linen caps. The men dress in tight-fitting blue raiment. They have good memories and a vast knowledge of astronomy. Their oxen and cows are like ours, only smaller. Venusians are divided into two races, one "mild and humane," the other a race of cruel, stupid giants. Martians speak in "sonorous" tones, live on fruit, and wear clothes made from the barks of trees. The lower parts of their faces have a black skin color.

Jovians are kind and gentle, living on fertile lands where there are many wild horses. Although grouped into nations, warfare is unknown. Those in warm climates go naked except for loincloths. Their tents and low wooden houses have sides decorated with stars on blue backgrounds. When they eat they sit on the leaves of fig trees with their legs crossed. Curiously, they do not walk erect but "creep along" by using their hands.

Saturnians are "upright, modest" people who live on fruits and seeds. Their planet's rings appear in the sky as "white as snow." Moon people are about the size of our seven-year-olds. Their voices, which sound like "thunder," are produced by expelling air from their abdomens.

In America the leading precursor of the Spiritualist movement, which began with the toe-rappings of the Fox sisters, was Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910), known as the Seer of Poughkeepsie (New York). He began his crazy career as a passionate Swedenborgian. When Davis was twenty the spirit of Swedenborg allegedly dictated to him, while he was in hypnotic trances, the most famous of his some thirty books: *Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelation, and A Voice to Mankind* (1847). My copy is a twelfth printing that runs to 756 pages. The book had more than thirty editions; a later tome, *The Great Harmonia,* is said to have had forty. Conan Doyle considered *Principles of Nature* "one of the most profound and original books of philosophy ever produced." He believed it came from the same "divine source" as the "valour of Joan of Arc, the sanctity of a Theresa . . . [and] the supernatural powers of Daniel Home."

Many familiar ploys of later psychic charlatans were pioneered by Davis. He earned large sums of money by clairvoyantly peering into people's bodies, diagnosing their ailments,

Martin Gardner's Notes of a Fringe Watcher: A Skeptic Looks at New Age Trends *will be published by Prometheus Books this Spring.*

and prescribing strange remedies. He performed what magicians call "eyeless vision"—having his eyes covered and reading documents handed to him. Doyle, who devotes a chapter to the Poughkeepsie Seer in his *History of Spiritualism,* was impressed by Davis's prophecies of horseless carriages, airplanes, typewriters, and the growth of Spiritualism. Doyle makes much of the fact that Davis was uneducated and read almost nothing, though there is ample evidence he was a voracious reader of books on philosophy, science, and religion. He founded and edited magazines, spewed forth a steady stream of articles, tracts, and pamphlets, lectured widely, and was more admired by his contemporaries than any native psychic today. But, when he died in 1910, at the age of eighty-four, he was running a small bookshop in Boston and his popularity was on the wane.

Davis's visions disclosed that all our planets are inhabited except Uranus, Neptune, and an unnamed ninth planet that occultists later identified as Pluto. The closer a planet is to the sun, the younger its age and the more gross and imperfect its inhabitants. Davis probably got this notion from Swedenborg, though it is also defended by Kant in a 1755 work on cosmology—"a view to be praised for its terrestrial modesty," comments Bertrand Russell in his *History of Western Philosophy,* "but not supported by any scientific grounds." Kant believed, as did Swedenborg, that there are other galaxies like our Milky Way, with planets that also teem with life.

Mercurians, Davis declared, have a "powerful retentive memory," but their ferocious animal nature generates perpetual warfare. "At this moment," he continues, "one of those destructive battles is about being consummated." Bodies of the Mercurians are completely covered with hair, giving them an appearance that "would be to us no more pleasing than that of an orangutan." Two barren deserts, covering almost all the planet's surface, are surrounded by boiling water. Severe winds blowing over the hot water cause great destruction.

Most of Venus, Davis reveals, is covered with water, and its atmosphere is "nearly like that which encompasses the earth." Astronomers then knew little about the rotation of Venus. Davis gives it a period of 23½ hours. It is now known to be 584 days, but let's not waste time on dull errors. Venusians on one side of the planet are kind, but their reasoning powers are weak. On the other side of Venus the inhabitants are giant savages—Davis here follows Swedenborg—who practice torture and cannibalism, sometimes devouring their own children.

Seven pages are devoted to the Martians—small humanoids with blue eyes and yellow faces. He confirms Swedenborg's revelation that the lower parts of their faces are dark in color. They are kind folk of high morals, who communicate by facial expressions. "When one conceives a thought . . . he casts his beaming eyes upon the eyes of another; and his sentiments instantly become known."

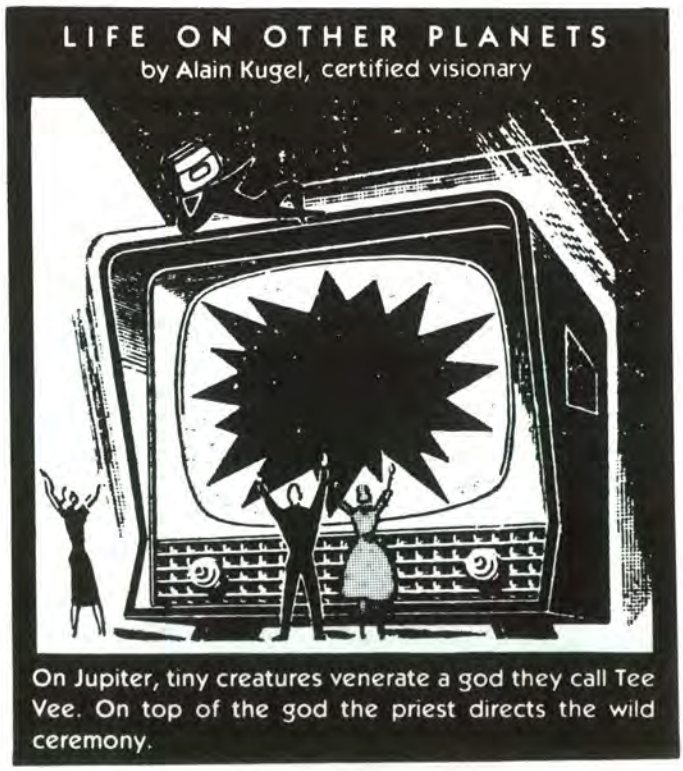
Of the asteroids that circle the Sun between the orbits of Earth and Mars, Davis writes only about the four then known: Ceres, Pallas, Juno, and Vesta. All bear only plant life, "although an era is now approaching that will call into existence a class of zoophytes." Eventually the four will coalesce into a single planet.

Davis's vision of Jupiter closely parallels Swedenborg's. The Jovians are larger and more beautiful than we are, and much more intelligent. "They do not walk erect, but assume an inclined position, frequently using their hands and arms in walking." Their upper lips are unusually prominent. The giant planet is free of diseases, but the Jovian life span is only about thirty years. Their nations are united in peaceful brotherhood.

The geography of Saturn is "very beautiful," Davis writes, "it being divided into two-thirds water and one-third earth." Its inhabitants represent the highest stage of development in our solar system—even more intelligent, beautiful, and good than the Jovians. Their heads are "very high and long," with brains composed of cortical glands, "each of which attracts and repels, performing systolic and diastolic motions" like those of our heart. I spare the reader Davis's dull descriptions of the lower forms of Saturn's animal life.

Hundreds of psychics and mediums in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed Swedenborg and Davis in their visions of life on the Moon and the planets. They drew maps. They sketched pictures of the aliens and their dwellings, their flora and fauna. A few even spoke their languages. These great revelations were uniformly and singularly unimaginative, as vapid as descriptions of Heaven regularly channeled by the dead through the throats and hands of mediums.

Thomas Lake Harris (1823-1906) was born in England, his parents settling in upstate New York when he was five. As a youth of twenty he became an enthusiastic disciple of the Poughkeepsie Seer, but the pair soon had a violent falling-out. Harris founded his own colony of believers, first near Wassaic, New York, later moving to nearby Amenia, then to Brockton, Pennsylvania, and finally to Santa Rosa, California. Harris was in constant communication with good and evil inhabitants of planets in our solar system and elsewhere, as well as with earthly fairies whom he preferred to call "fays." His astronomical revelations were recorded in books of mediocre verse,



On Jupiter, tiny creatures venerate a god they call Tee Vee. On top of the god the priest directs the wild ceremony.

"After one séance, when a floating trumpet was found warm on the sides and moist at the mouthpiece, Valiantine explained that spirits who spoke through it had to materialize both warm hands and wet lips. Supposed fingerprints of other discarnates came from his left big toe, his fingers, and an elbow."

starting with his *Epic of the Starry Heavens,* which he claimed was dictated to him in a trance. Doyle, in a chapter on Harris in his *Edge of the Unknown,* thinks Harris's poetry is of "high order," even reminding him of Blake and Shelley!

As so often the case with weird religious cults, there was considerable free love in the colony where Harris was top guru to a motley group of wealthy women and befuddled men. Harris believed that everybody is bisexual, including all the angels and even God. He considered himself united to a spirit called "Lady Lily." Lilistan was Harris's name for Heaven. Doyle found his prose books incomprehensible and disliked the way Harris attacked the rising spiritualist movement as satanic in origin. He said he couldn't decide whether Harris was a "megalomaniac ranter endowed with considerable worldly cunning, or one who really had a breath of the divine afflatus."

Laurence Oliphant, a distinguished British diplomat and writer, and his beloved mother, Lady Oliphant, were Harris's most notable converts. Both joined his colony, and for a dozen years obeyed the guru's every whim. Laurence was forced to perform such menial tasks as cleaning stables and selling strawberries at railway stations. After he and his mother became disenchanted, he sued Harris for the return of property he had given the community, and Harris in turn tried to get Oliphant committed to a mental hospital.

Harris claimed to have achieved the seventh and final stage of breath control. This, he said just before his death at age eighty-three, made him young again. Unable to believe their leader truly dead, his followers waited several months before reporting his departure for Lilistan.

Hélène Smith was a young French medium whose spirit controls included Victor Hugo and the eighteenth-century Italian imposter Alessandro Cagliostro. Queen Marie Antoinette was one of her many incarnations. Hélène levitated tables, materialized flowers, fruit, shells filled with wet sand, vases, Chinese money, and other objects. Only a hopeless paranormalist could suppose that these miracles were anything but conscious fraud. She is best known, however, for her frequent out-of-body trips to Mars. Not only did she (or Martians speaking through her) describe the Martians and their culture in boring detail, but she wrote and spoke fluently a bizarre Martian language.

Hélène's Martians were three feet tall, with heads twice as wide as high. Both sexes dressed in trousers. Théodore Flournoy, a Swiss psychologist, investigated Hélène's claims, and wrote a book about them, *From India to the Planet Mars* (1900). He concluded that her Martian language was a form of French glossolalia, and that her visits to Mars revealed nothing except what was inside her head.

In the United States Miss Smith had a rival in Mrs. Smead, pseudonym of a medium who was the wife of preacher William Cleveland. About 1900 she began to channel messages from inhabitants of Mars and Jupiter. She sketched maps of the surfaces of both planets, including the famous Martian canals then widely promoted by astronomer Percival Lowell. She drew pictures of Martians, their houses, ships, airplanes, and so on, and began to speak the Martian tongue. The Martian word for man was *mare,* for woman *kare.* Sample sentence: *Moken irin trinen minin aru ti maren inine tine,* which means "Flowers bloom there, many of the great men plant them." According to Mrs. Smead, Jupiter is where Earth's babies go when they die. James Hervey Hyslop, professor of philosophy and psychology at Columbia University and one of the nation's leading spiritualists, authenticated Mrs. Smead's great psychic abilities.

America's most famous "direct voice" medium—a medium through whom discarnates speak in their own natural intonations—was George Valiantine, of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Hundreds of different voices, in many languages, came through his lips as his controls varied. One control was Confucius. I mention Valiantine because a discarnate named Dr. Barnett fed him the usual dreary information about humanoids on Mars. Valiantine wrote numerous books. His devoted followers were typically undismayed whenever he was caught in fraud. After one séance, when a floating trumpet was found warm on the sides and moist at the mouthpiece, Valiantine explained that spirits who spoke through it had to materialize both warm hands and wet lips. A thumb print of Conan Doyle that Valiantine produced in a séance was discovered to be a print of the medium's right big toe. Supposed fingerprints of other discarnates came from his left big toe, his fingers, and an elbow. Valiantine reportedly sobbed when confronted with these facts, though he denied any cheating and said he couldn't understand what had happened. According to Doyle, Valiantine had "exceptional psychic powers."

Among religious leaders who explored planets by way of clairvoyance or out-of-body travels, the most famous was Mrs. Ellen G. White, inspired prophetess of Seventh-Day Adventism. In her younger days she repeatedly went into trance states during which, her followers maintained, she completely stopped breathing. On the basis of her lurid visions, which she said came directly from God, she filled dozens of books with exotic details about biblical events—details missing from the Bible—as well as about doctrines peculiar to the Adventist movement. She also appeared before local church congregations to give what today would be called "psychic readings" about problems facing church members.

One day in 1846, when Ellen was nineteen, she went into her usual trance and made a quick tour of the solar system. She gave glowing descriptions of Jupiter and its four large moons, Saturn with seven moons, and Uranus with six. She failed to mention Neptune or Pluto, at that time unknown. Ellen insisted she knew nothing about astronomy. Church elder Joseph Bates, an amateur astronomer present during the trance,

murmured "This is of the Lord," and instantly abandoned his doubts that Ellen's visions were from on high. Unfortunately, a few years later telescopes spotted additional Jovian and Saturnian moons. The count now stands at seventeen or more for Jupiter, and at least twenty-two for Saturn. Uranus was found to have only four moons, correcting an earlier faulty report of six. A fifth, however, was discovered recently, and the count could go back up to six.

In 1849 Mrs. White wrote: "The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes, they were noble, majestic, and lovely. . . . Then I was taken to a world which had seven moons. There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated."

Was Mrs. White referring to her 1846 vision of Saturn? Seventh-Day Adventist minister J. L. Loughborough, in his *Rise and Progress of the Seventh Day Adventists* (1892), quotes from a letter written by a woman who was present at the 1846 trance:

> Sister White was in very feeble health, and while prayers were offered in her behalf, the Spirit of God rested upon us. We soon noticed that she was insensible to earthly things. This was her first view of the planetary world. After counting aloud the moons of Jupiter, and soon after those of Saturn, she gave a beautiful description of the rings of the latter. She then said, "The inhabitants are a tall, majestic people, so unlike the inhabitants of earth. Sin has never entered here." It was evident from Brother Bates's smiling face that his past doubts in regard to the source of her visions were fast leaving him. We all knew that Captain Bates was a great lover of astronomy, as he would often locate many of the heavenly bodies for our instruction. When Sister White replied to his questions, after the vision, saying that she had never studied or otherwise received knowledge in this direction, he was filled with joy and happiness. He praised God, and expressed his belief that this vision concerning the planets was given that he might never doubt again.

In 1905, when Pastor Loughborough revised his book for a new edition, an eighth moon of Saturn had been found. It is hard to believe, but the word "seven" in the above passage was changed to "eight." Adventists later claimed this was a printer's error! Incidentally, Mrs. White's allegedly God-inspired books are now known to swarm with long passages shamelessly plagiarized from earlier writers. (See *The White Lie,* by ex-Adventist minister Walter T. Rea, 1982, a book with such explosive disclosures that hundreds of Adventist ministers have since abandoned the church. See also Rea's article in FREE INQUIRY, Fall 1984.)

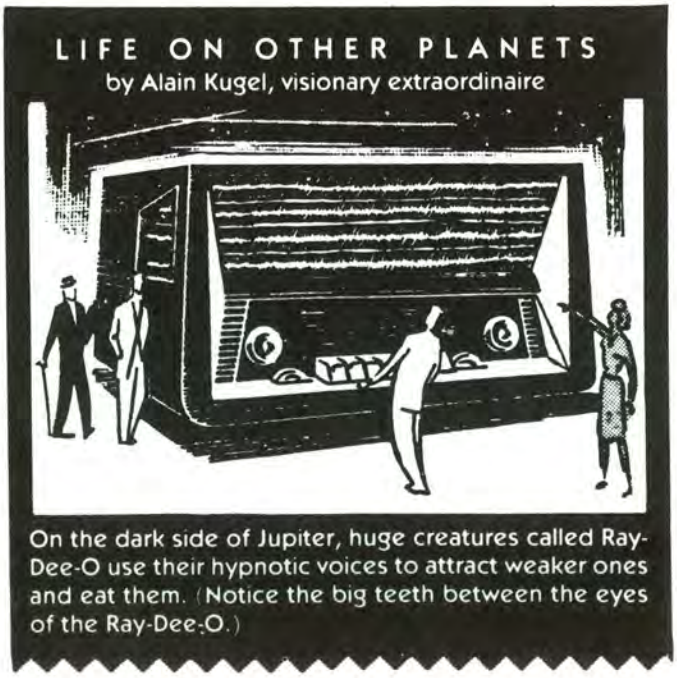
In 1848 Mrs. White had one of her most dramatic visions of the Second Coming. She saw the Holy City of Jerusalem emerge from an open space in the nebula of Orion. Here is how she spoke of the vision in *Early Writings:*

> December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said "heaven," in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said "earth" He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.
>
> Dark, heavy clouds came up, and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The holy city will come down through that open space. I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken, and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.

The beautiful nebula of Orion, which appears to the unaided eye as a bright star in Orion's sword, is a cloud of extremely low density luminous gas that has long fascinated astronomers and poets. Here is Merlin speaking in Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien:*

> A single misty star
> Which is the second in a line of stars
> That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,
> I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
> Of some vast charm concluded in that star
> To make fame nothing.

Near the nebula's center is a small dark patch that seems



On the dark side of Jupiter, huge creatures called Ray-Dee-O use their hypnotic voices to attract weaker ones and eat them. (Notice the big teeth between the eyes of the Ray-Dee-O.)

CATCH UP ON WHAT YOU'VE MISSED!

Use Card to Order.

Back Issues

(A 20% discount will be given on orders of 5 or more copies of the same issue; 40% on orders of 10 or more.)

FREE INQUIRY

Summary of Major Articles

Winter 1980/81, Vol. 1, no. 1 — Secular Humanist Declaration. Democratic Humanism, *Sidney Hook*. Humanism: Secular or Religious? *Paul Beattie*. Free Thought, *Gordon Stein*. The Fundamentalist Right, *William Ryan*. The Moral Majority, *Sol Gordon*. The Creation/Evolution Controversy, *H. James Birx*. Moral Education, *Robert Hall*. Morality Without Religion, *Marvin Kohl, Joseph Fletcher*. Freedom Is Frightening, *Roy Fairfield*. The Road to Freedom, *Mihajlo Mihajlov*. **$3.50**

Spring 1981, Vol. 1, no. 2 — The Secular Humanist Declaration: Pro and Con, *John Roche, Sidney Hook, Phyllis Schlafly, Gina Allen, Roscoe Drummond, Lee Nisbet, Patrick Buchanan, Paul Kurtz*. New England Puritans and the Moral Majority, *George Marshall*. The Pope on Sex, *Vern Bullough*. On the Way to Mecca, *Thomas Szasz*. The Blasphemy Laws, *Gordon Stein*. The Meaning of Life, *Marvin Kohl*. Does God Exist? *Kai Nielsen*. Prophets of the Procrustean Collective, *Antony Flew*. The Madrid Conference, *Stephen Fenichell*. Natural Aristocracy, *Lee Nisbet*. **$3.50**

Summer 1981, Vol. 1, no. 3 — Sex Education, *Peter Scales, Thomas Szasz*. Moral Education, *Howard Radest*. Teen-age Pregnancy, *Vern Bullough*. The New Book-Burners, *William Ryan*. The Moral Majority, *Gerald Larue*. Liberalism, *Edward Ericson*. Scientific Creationism, *Delos McKown*. New Evidence on the Shroud of Turin, *Joe Nickell*. Agnosticism, *H. J. Blackham*. Science and Religion, *George Tomashevich*. Secular Humanism in Israel, *Isaac Hasson*. **$3.50**

Fall 1981, Vol. 1, no. 4 — The Thunder of Doom, *Edward Morgan*. Secular Humanists: Threat or Menace? *Art Buchwald*. Financing of the Repressive Right, *Edward Roeder*. Communism and American Intellectuals, *Sidney Hook*. A Symposium on the Future of Religion, *Daniel Bell, Joseph Fletcher, William Sims Bainbridge, Paul Kurtz*. Resurrection Fictions, *Randel Helms*. **$3.50**

Winter 1981/82, Vol. 2, no. 1 — The Importance of Critical Discussion, *Karl Popper*. Freedom and Civilization, *Ernest Nagel*. Humanism: The Conscience of Humanity, *Konstantin Kolenda*. Secularism in Islam, *Nazih N. M. Ayubi*. Humanism in the 1980s, *Paul Beattie*. The Effect of Education on Religious Faith, *Burnham Beckwith*. **$3.50**

Spring 1982, Vol. 2, no. 2 — A Call for the Critical Examination of the Bible and Religion. Interview with Isaac Asimov on Science and the Bible, *Paul Kurtz*. The Continuing Monkey War, *L. Sprague de Camp*. The Erosion of Evolution, *Antony Flew*. The Religion of Secular Humanism: A Judicial Myth, *Leo Pfeffer*. Humanism as an American Heritage, *Nicholas Gier*. The Nativity Legends, *Randel Helms*. Norman Podhoretz's Neo-Puritanism, *Lee Nisbet*. **$3.50**

Summer 1982 Vol. 2, no. 3 (special issue) — A Symposium on Science, the Bible, and Darwin: The Bible Re-examined, *Robert Alley, Gerald Larue, John Priest, Randel Helms*. Darwin, Evolution, and Creationism, *Philip Appleman, William Mayer, Charles Cazeau, H. James Birx, Garrett Hardin, Sol Tax, Antony Flew*. Ethics and Religion, *Joseph Fletcher, Richard Taylor, Kai Nielsen, Paul Beattie*. Science and Religion, *Michael Novak, Joseph Blau*. **$5.00**

Fall 1982, Vol. 2, no. 4 — An Interview with Sidney Hook at Eighty, *Paul Kurtz*. Sidney Hook: A Personal Portrait, *Nicholas Capaldi*. The Religion and Biblical Criticism Research Project, *Gerald Larue*. Biblical Criticism and Its Discontents, *R. Joseph Hoffmann*. Boswell Confronts Hume: An Encounter with the Great Infidel, *Joy Frieman*. Humanism and Politics, *James Simpson, Larry Briskman*. Humanism and the Politics of Nostalgia, *Paul Kurtz*. Abortion and Morality, *Richard Taylor*. **$3.50**

Winter 1982/83, Vol. 3, no. 1 — 1983—The Year of the Bible. Academic Freedom Under Assault in California, *Barry Singer, Nicholas Hardeman, Vern Bullough*. The Play Ethic, *Robert Rimmer*. Interview with Corliss Lamont. Was Jesus a Magician? *Morton Smith*. Astronomy and the "Star of Bethlehem," *Gerald Larue*. Living with Deep Truths in a Divided World, *Sidney Hook*. Anti-Science: The Strange Case of Paul Feyerabend, *Martin Gardner*. **$3.50**

Spring 1983, Vol. 3, no. 2 — The Founding Fathers and Religious Liberty, *Robert Alley*. Madison's Legacy Endangered, *Edd Doerr*. James Madison's Dream: A Secular Republic, *Robert Rutland*. The Murder of Hypatia of Alexandria, *Robert Mohar*. Hannah Arendt: The Modern Seer, *Richard Kostelanetz*. Was Karl Marx a Humanist? articles by *Sidney Hook, Jan Narveson*, and *Paul Kurtz*. **$3.50**

Summer 1983, Vol. 3, no. 3 (special issue) — Religion in American Politics Symposium: Is America a Judeo-Christian Republic? *Paul Kurtz*. The First Amendment and Religious Liberty, *Sen. Lowell Weicker, Sam Ervin, Leo Pfeffer*. Secular Roots of the American Political System, *Henry Steele Commager, Daniel Boorstin, Robert Rutland, Richard Morris, Michael Novak*. The Bible in Politics, *Gerald Larue, Robert Alley, James Robinson*. Bibliography for Biblical Study. **$5.00**

Fall 1983, Vol. 3, no. 4 — The Academy of Humanism. The Future of Humanism, *Paul Kurtz*. Humanist Self-Portraits, *Brand Blanshard, Barbara Wootton, Joseph Fletcher, Sir Raymond Firth, Jean-Claude Pecker*. Interview with Paul MacCready. A Personal Humanist Manifesto, *Vern Bullough*. The Enduring Humanist Legacy of Greece, *Marvin Perry*. The Age of Unreason, *Thomas Vernon*. Apocalypse Soon, *Daniel Cohen*. On the Sesquicentennial of Robert Ingersoll, *Frank Smith*. The Historicity of Jesus, *John Priest, D. R. Oppenheimer, G. A. Wells*. **$3.50**

Winter 1983/84, Vol. 4, no. 1 — Interview with B. F. Skinner. Was George Orwell a Humanist? *Antony Flew*. Population Control vs. Freedom in China, *Vern and Bonnie Bullough*. Academic Freedom at Liberty Baptist College, *Lynn Ridenhour*. The Mormon Church: Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, *George Smith;* The History of Mormonism and Church Authorities: Interview with Sterling M. McMurrin. Anti-Science: The Irrationalist Vogue of the 1970s, *Lewis Feuer*. The End of the Galilean Cease-Fire? *James Hansen*. Who Really Killed Goliath? *Gerald Larue*. Humanism in Norway: Strategies for Growth, *Levi Fragell*. **$3.50**

Spring 1984, Vol. 4, no. 2 — Christian Science Practitioners and Legal Protection for Children. *Rita Swan;* Child Abuse and Neglect in Ultrafundamentalist Cults and Sects, *Lowell Streiker*. The Foundations of Religious

FREE INQUIRY Back Issues (continued)

Liberty and Democracy: A Symposium, *Carl Henry, Paul Kurtz, Father Ernest Fortin, Lee Nisbet.* Joseph Fletcher, *Richard Taylor.* Biblical Views of Sex: Blessing or Handicap? *Jeffrey J. W. Baker.* Moral Absolutes and Foreign Policy, *Nicholas Capaldi.* The Vatican Ambassador, *Edd Doerr,* A Naturalistic Basis for Morality, *John Kekes.* Humanist Self-Portraits, *Matthew Ies Spetter, Floyd Matson, Richard Kostelanetz.* **$3.50**

Summer 1984, Vol. 4, no. 3 (special issue) — School Prayer, *Paul Kurtz, Ronald Lindsay, Patrick Buchanan, Mark Twain.* Science vs. Religion in Future Constitutional Conflicts, *Delos McKown.* God and the Professors, *Sidney Hook.* Armageddon and Biblical Apocalyptic, *Paul Kurtz, Joseph Edward Barnhart, Vern Bullough, Randel Helms, Gerald Larue, John Priest, James Robinson, Robert Alley.* Is the U.S. Humanist Movement in a State of Collapse? *John Dart.* **$5.00**

Fall 1984, Vol. 4, no. 4 — Humanist Author Attacked, *Phyllis Schlafly, Sol Gordon.* Humanists vs. Christians in Milledgeville, Georgia, *Kenneth Saladin.* Suppression and Censorship in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church: Ellen White's Habit, *Douglas Hackleman;* Who Profits from the Prophet? *Walter Rea.* Keeping the Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls, *John Allegro.* Health Superstition, *Rodger Pirnie Doyle.* Humanism in Africa: Paradox and Illusion, *Paul Kurtz.* Humanism in South Africa, *Don Sergeant.* **$3.75**

Winter 1984/85, Vol. 5, no. 1 — Are American Educational Reforms Doomed? *Delos McKown.* The Door-to-Door Crusade of the Jehovah's Witnesses: The Apocalypticism of the Jehovah's Witnesses, *Lois Randle;* The Watchtower, *Laura Lage.* Sentiment, Guilt, and Reason in the Management of Wild Herds, *Garrett Hardin.* Animal Rights Re-evaluated, *James Simpson.* Elmina Slenker: Infidel and Atheist, *Edward Jervey.* Symposium: Humanism Is a Religion, *Archie Bahm;* Humanism Is a Philosophy, *Thomas Vernon;* Humanism: An Affirmation of Life, *Andre Bacard.* **$3.75**

Spring 1985, Vol. 5, no. 2 — Update on the Shroud of Turin, *Joe Nickell.* The Vatican's View of Sex, *Robert Francoeur.* An Interview with E. O. Wilson, *Jeffrey Saver.* Religion and Parapsychology: Parapsychology: The "Spiritual" Science, *James Alcock;* Science, Religion and the Paranormal, *John Beloff.* The Legacy of Voltaire (Part 1), *Paul Edwards.* The Origins of Christianity, *R. Joseph Hoffmann.* **$3.75**

Summer 1985, Vol. 5, no. 3 — Finding Common Ground Between Believers and Unbelievers, *Paul Kurtz.* Render Unto Jesus the Things That Are Jesus', *Robert Alley.* Jesus in Time and Space, *Gerald Larue.* Interview with Sidney Hook on China, Marxism, and Human Freedom. Evangelical Agnosticism, *William Henry Young.* To Refuse to Be a God, *Khoren Arisian.* The Legacy of Voltaire (Part 2), *Paul Edwards.* **$3.75**

Fall 1985, Vol. 5, no. 4 — Two Forms of Humanistic Psychology, *Albert Ellis.* Psychoanalysis: Science or Pseudoscience? Grünbaum on Freud, *Frank Sulloway;* Philosophy of Science and Psychoanalysis, *Michael Ruse;* The Death Knell of Psychoanalysis, *H. J. Eysenck;* Looking Backward, *Lee Nisbet.* Jesus in History and Myth: New Testament Scholarship and Christian Belief, *Van Harvey;* A Liberal Christian View, *John Hick.* The Winter Solstice and the Origins of Christmas, *Lee Carter.* **$3.75**

Winter 1985/86, Vol. 6, no. 1 — Symposium: Is Secular Humanism a Religion? The Religion of Secular Humanism, *Paul Beattie;* Residual Religion, *Joseph Fletcher;* Pluralistic Humanism, *Sidney Hook;* On the Misuse of Language, *Paul Kurtz.* The Habit of Reason, *Brand Blanshard.* An Interview with Adolf Grünbaum. Homer Duncan's Crusade Against Secular Humanism, *Paul Kurtz.* Should a Humanist Celebrate Christmas? *Thomas Flynn.* On Being a Pedestrian, *Robert Wisne.* **$3.75**

Spring 1986, Vol. 6, no. 2 (special issue) — Faith-Healing: Miracle or Fraud? The Need for Investigation, *Paul Kurtz;* "Be Healed in the Name of God!" *James Randi;* A Medical Anthropologist's View of American Shamans, *Philip Singer;* On the Relative Sincerity of Faith-Healers, *Joseph Barnhart;* Does Faith-Healing Work? *Paul Kurtz.* God Helps Those Who Help Themselves, *Thomas Flynn.* The Effect of Intelligence on U.S. Religious Faith, *Burnham Beckwith.* **$3.75**

Summer 1986, Vol. 6, no. 3 — The Shocking Truth About Faith-Healing: Deceit in the Name of God: What Can Be Done? *Paul Kurtz;* Peter Popoff Reaches Heaven Via 39.17 Megahertz, *James Randi;* Peter Popoff: Miracle Worker or Scam Artist? *Steven Schafersman;* Behind the Scenes with Peter Popoff, *Robert Steiner;* W. V. Grant's Faith-Healing Act Revisited, *Paul Kurtz.* Further Reflections on Ernest Angley, *William McMahon, James Griffis.* Salvation for Sale: An Insider's View of Pat Robertson's Organization, *Gerard Straub.* Belief and Unbelief Worldwide: Religious Skepticism in Latin America, *Jorge Gracia;* Science, Technology, and Ideology in the Hispanic World, *Mario Bunge;* Religious Belief in Contemporary Indian Society, *M. P. Rege;* Humanism in Modern India: An Interview with V. M. Tarkunde, *Tariq Ismail.* The Revolt Against the Lightning Rod, *Al Seckel, John Edwards.* **$3.75**

Fall 1986, Vol. 6, no. 4 — Humanist Centers: New Secular Humanist Centers, *Paul Kurtz;* The Need for Friendship Centers, *Vern Bullough;* Toward New Humanist Organizations, *Bob Wisne.* The Evidence Against Reincarnation: Are Past-Life Regressions Evidence for Reincarnation? *Melvin Harris;* The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 1), *Paul Edwards.* Protestantism, Catholicism, and Unbelief in Present-Day France, *Jean Boussinesq.* More on Faith-Healing: CSER's Investigation, *Gerald Larue;* An Answer to Peter Popoff, *James Randi;* Popoff's TV Empire Declines, *David Alexander;* Richard Roberts's Healing Crusade, *Henry Gordon.* Is Secular Humanism a Religion? A Response to My Critics, *Paul Beattie;* Diminishing Returns, *Joseph Fletcher;* On Definition-Mongering, *Paul Kurtz.* **$3.75**

Winter 1986/87, Vol. 7, no. 1 — The New Inquisition in the Schools, *Paul Kurtz.* Naturalistic Humanism, *Corliss Lamont.* God and Morality, *Sidney Hook.* Secular Humanist Center Founded, *Tom Flynn.* FREE INQUIRY's Fifth Annual Conference. Anti-Abortion and Religion, *Betty McCollister.* A Positive Humanist Statement on Sexual Morality, *Robert Francoeur.* The Growth of Fundamentalism Worldwide: A Humanist Response, *Paul Kurtz.* Unbelief in the Netherlands, *Rob Tielman.* Dutch Humanism, *G. C. Soeters.* Belief and Unbelief in Mexico, *Mario Mendez-Acosta.* How the Old Testament Was Written, *Gerald Larue.* The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 2), *Paul Edwards.* **$3.75**

Spring 1987, Vol. 7 no. 2 — Personal Paths of Humanism: What Religion Means to Me, *B. F. Skinner;* Biology's Spiritual Products, *E. O. Wilson;* Meeting Human Minds, *Steve Allen;* The Night I Saw the Light, *Gina Allen;* An Evolutionary Perspective, *Paul MacCready;* Testament of a Humanist, *Albert Ellis.* Psychology of the Bible-Believer, *Edmund Cohen.* Biblical Arguments for Slavery, *Morton Smith.* The 'Escape Goat' of Christianity, *Delos McKown.* Free Thought and Humanism in Germany, *Renate Bauer.* The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 3), *Paul Edwards.* CSER's Faith-Healing Project Update: The Happy Hunters, *David Alexander;* An Encounter with Pastor David Epley, *Kate Ware Ankenbrandt.* 'New Age' Gurus, *Robert Basil.* **$3.75**

Summer 1987, Vol. 7, no. 3 — Japan and Biblical Religion, *Richard Rubenstein.* Was the Universe Created? *Victor Stenger.* Science-Fantasy Religious Cults, *Martin Gardner.* The Relativity of Biblical Ethics, *Joe Edward Barnhart.* The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 4), *Paul Edwards.* Personal Paths of Humanism: A Secular Humanist Confession, *Joseph Fletcher;* Free from Religion, *Anne Nicole Gaylor;* Surrender to Life, *Rita Mae Brown;* As If Living and Loving Were One, *Ashley Montagu;* Growing Up Agnostic in Argentina, *Mario Bunge.* Letter to a Missionary, *Ronn Nadeau.* The Cult of Objectivism, *Nathaniel Branden.* Tyranny of the Creed, *John Allegro.* **$3.75**

Fall 1987, Vol. 7, no. 4 (special issue) — Fundamentalist Christians Schools —A National Scandal: The Truth and Consequences of Fundamentalist Christian Schooling, *Alan Peshkin;* Reading, Writing, and Religion, *Mary Beth Gehrman;* Children Are Not Chattel, *Kathy Collins;* Selections from Fundamentalist School Textbooks; The World According to Reverend Barney Lee. Is the Sexual Revolution Over? *Paul Kurtz, Rob Tielman, and Sol Gordon.* The Imagination: A Double-Edged Sword, *Linda Emery.* Peter Popoff's Broken Window, *David Alexander.* A Common Moral Universe? *Sidney Hook.* Human and World Care, *Benjamin Spock.* Argument Without End, *Michael Ruse.* **$3.75**

Secular Humanist Bulletin

Back Issues of the *Secular Humanist Bulletin,* published quarterly and free with a subscription to FREE INQUIRY, are also available. Each additional copy is $1.00, plus $.50 for postage and handling. Discounts are available on bulk orders.

FREE INQUIRY • Box 5 • Buffalo, NY 14215-0005 • Tel.: 716-834-2921

surrounded by four stars at the corners of a trapezium. In his book *Astronomy and the Bible* (published by the Adventist Church in 1919), Lucas A. Reed devotes his last three chapters to the "vast charm" of this nebula. It is nothing less, says Reed, than the entrance to God's dwelling place. He sees the nebula as shaped like a funnel, wide end toward us, the dark patch marking an open space that leads directly to God's throne. With the familiar combination of assurance and ignorance so characteristic of fundamentalists, Reed writes:

> We believe, then, that without question, beyond or through this inapproachable light of Orion lie, somewhere, heaven and the throne of God. Mrs. White, without astronomical knowledge, told something about Orion that no astronomer of that time had yet measured up to. Now, without knowing a thing about her statement, and probably not caring to know, they tell us facts which bear out her statement about an "open space in Orion."

Astronomers still haven't measured up to this claim, and I cannot say how many Adventists today take it seriously. Most of them, I suspect, have never heard it made. Nor do I know how many now take seriously their church's early belief that millions of transparent hailstones are circling Earth, held there in reserve until the last days of Judgment when they will fall as one of the seven last plagues described in the Apocalypse.

You might suppose that in this enlightened age of science no educated person would take psychic astronomy seriously. Alas, our age is far from enlightened. Probably a larger fraction of intelligent people today believe in astrology than did in thirteenth-century Europe. Parapsychologists tell us that remote viewing (clairvoyance) is independent of distance. If so, it is entirely reasonable to suppose that modern psychics can remote-view another planet as easily as they can a distant spot on Earth.

In 1973, when those two indomitable paraphysicists Harold Puthoff and Russell Targ were at Stanford Research Institute, they supervised a psychic probe of Jupiter. Two psychics were involved: the Manhattan Scientologist Ingo Swann, one of the most successful subjects of earlier remote-viewing experiments by P and T (Puthoff and Targ), and Harold Sherman, an elderly psychic who runs the ESP Research Associates Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas. Sherman's *ESP Manual* tells how to forsee the future, enter higher dimensions, communicate with the dead, and record spirit voices. His book *The Dead Are Alive* was praised by Norman Vincent Peale (in a letter that Sherman quotes in his *Fate* magazine advertisements) as "a masterpiece . . . [perhaps] the greatest of all your great books. I hope it will be widely read."

Sherman professes to have seen UFOs in the presence of hundreds of witnesses. "There has to be an intelligence behind them far surpassing our own," he told *Psychic Magazine* in an interview in 1973, "and they must have a purpose in visiting us in greater and greater numbers at this truly momentous time in our troubled earth history." Sherman believes he had precognitive knowledge of UFOs as early as 1946 and 1947, when he wrote two science-fiction yarns for *Amazing Stories:* "The Green Man" and "The Green Man Returns," which told of an extraterrestrial with enormous psi powers who visits Earth in a spaceship. The stories may have given rise to the popular view of "little green men" from other worlds. You can buy a book containing the two stories from Sherman. Here is how he advertises it in *Fate:*

> Who knows—in keeping with world-famous Sherman's amazing psychic vision—the peoples of Earth may be on the eve of an actual visitation of Space Beings in a fleet of UFO's! So, why not prepare yourself for this possible future happening by reading about the coming of the Green Men, their appearance to be signalled by the sighting of a Great Light, to herald the bringing to earth of a New Plan of Living designed to bring Peace to Mankind!

Like all contemporary seers, Sherman has a miserable record as a prophet. Consider what he said (in the same interview) about the approach of the comet Kohoutek:

> The spectacular advent of Comet Kohoutek is bound to have an immense effect upon man's mind. This issue of your publication is scheduled to be in the hands of your readers at the time that the comet is blazing in our skies.
>
> I predict many will be struck with fear to the point of panic; others will regard this heavenly display as the most spiritual experience of a lifetime, and will look for new metaphysical and religious meanings. I also feel that the physical effects of the comet's passing may influence weather conditions on earth and lead to eventual meteoric showers and other

Free Inquiry

a quarterly

devoted to the ideals of secularism and freedom

We invite you to subscribe

☐ 1 year $20.00
☐ 2 years $35.00
☐ 3 years $48.00

Subscription includes the *Secular Humanist Bulletin*

☐ New ☐ Renew

☐ Check or money order enclosed

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Acct. # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____
(print clearly)

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Outside U.S. add $6.00 for surface mail, $12.00 for airmail. (U.S. funds on U.S. bank).

FREE INQUIRY, Box 5 • Buffalo, New York 14215-0005
Tele: 716-834-2921 12/87

astronomic happenings.

I do not, however, think the comet's appearance is by divine decree. Rather, I may have sensed an event such as this coming toward us in time, its arrival synchronized with a most critical time on earth, which could certainly be now.

Back to the Stanford Research Institute farce. On April 27, 1973, Sherman was at his house near Mountain Home, Arkansas, and Ingo Swann was at SRI in Menlo Park, California. Each simultaneously projected his astral body toward Jupiter in an attempt to preview the results of Pioneer 10, scheduled to fly by the giant planet in December. Each wrote down what he "saw." Swann then culled what the two reports had in common and submitted the results to P and T.

"I was asked to examine the accuracy of their account," Carl Sagan wrote in his book *Other Worlds* (1975). "If their reports had been submitted in my elementary astronomy course, they would have received grades of D. Their reports were not better than what can be extracted from the worst popularizations of planetary astronomy; they were filled with the most obvious misunderstandings both about Jupiter and about Pioneer 10."

Sagan continues:

As just one example, Pioneer 10 was reported shaped like a bullet—perhaps the average man's most naive picture of an interplanetary spacecraft. In fact, interplanetary spacecraft are not streamlined because they do not enter planetary atmospheres. They may have, and Pioneer 10 does have, all sorts of odd and convenient shapes because there is negligible atmospheric resistance in the medium through which they travel.

So far as I know, the results of this puerile probe have not been published, and P and T have had little to say about it. Undaunted, P and T sent the same two psychics to Mercury on March 11, 1974, in advance of the probe by Mariner 10 later that month. This time Swann was at his New York City apartment while Sherman was again in Arkansas. Swann wrote that his astral body was up into space in a few minutes, speeding toward the Sun. Sherman did not describe his own blast-off, though he spoke later of flying around Mercury to get good close-up looks.

The two psychics scored one lucky hit. They reported a magnetic field around Mercury; astronomers had not anticipated this because of the little planet's slow spin. But this success was balanced by huge blunders. Sherman described Mercury's surface as quivering like jelly, with "enormously hot energy bubbles of gigantic size and there seems to be depths or craters from which exude whitish yellow and green vapors." He also saw a "jagged mountain landscape" with "great black bands" that formed an immense "loop-like figure eight some hundreds of miles in width and length."

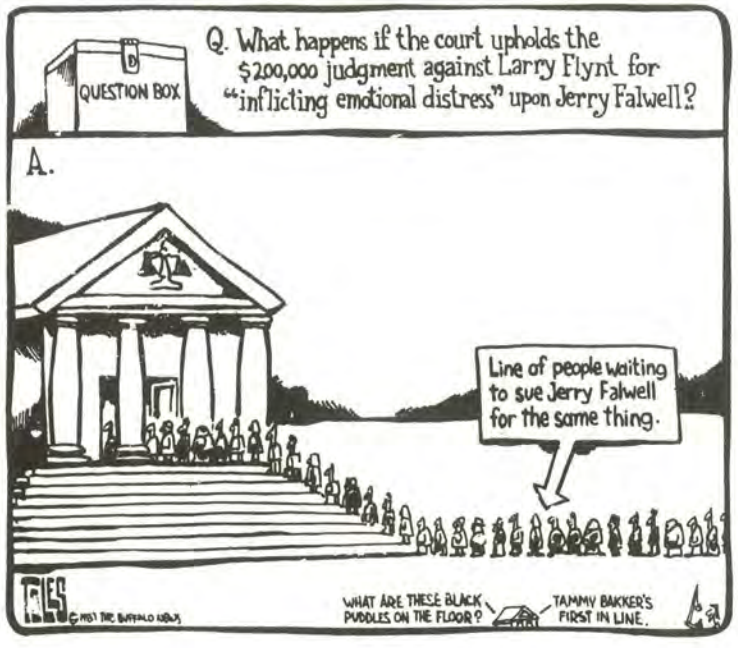
Although Mercury has an extremely thin atmosphere, there are no clouds. Ingo saw lots of clouds that "come and go very fast and they form sort of on the day side of the planet." He also saw primitive life forms: ". . . lichens, sort of water life which attaches to the rocks. . . ." Unfortunately, the Mariner probe showed no water, no clouds, no green vapors, no mountain ranges, no bubbles, no black figure eight, no quivering jelly—only a desolate crater-pocked surface similar to the Moon's.

In 1976 Swann and Sherman collaborated on a visit to Mars, but I have been unable to locate information about that voyage. That same year they also remote-viewed a canoe trip by Canadian explorer Dale Graff down the Coppermine River north of the Arctic Circle. Each day Swann and Sherman mailed their impressions to P and T at SRI, and Sherman claimed dramatic success. But, if P and T have published the results of this out-of-body probe, I am unaware of it.

Sherman and Swann did not see any humanoids on Jupiter or Mercury (and presumably none on Mars). Does this mean that today's occultists are less naive than those of the past? I think not. When Davis had his remote visions, little was known about conditions on the planets, and the possibility they were inhabited could not be ruled out. Even as late as the early years of the flying-saucer mania it was believed that the aliens came from Venus or Mars. Today, new information makes it extremely unlikely that life of any sort exists in the solar system except on Earth, and possibly on Saturn's largest moon, Titan. The aliens have been moved outward to planets orbiting other suns, or up to "higher dimensional planes." Allowing for scientific progress, the astronomical visions of Sherman and Swann are no less flatulent than the visions of Davis.

Sagan has summed up the results of psychic astronomy crisply in *Other Worlds:*

There is no evidence that any mystic has done better in guessing the nature of the planets than he could do without his mystical powers but with the ability to read the better elementary astronomy books. •



Voices of Dissent Within the Catholic Church

The following articles have been adapted from papers delivered at FREE INQUIRY*'s sixth annual conference at American University in Washington, D.C. These papers focus on the role of dissent within the Roman Catholic church. Upcoming issues of* FREE INQUIRY *will publish some of the other talks.*

The Bishops and the Ambivalent Bomb

Francis X. Winters

The Roman Catholic bishops of America, it has often been said, are un-American. Now there seems to be new life in this charge, after a decade or so of easy ecumenism. The publication and continuing public discussion of the pastoral letter "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response" have set the bishops at odds once more with secular political thought, both conservative and liberal. Indeed, opposition to the pastoral constitutes one of the few common items on the agenda of conservative and liberal intellectuals in an otherwise fractious political atmosphere. Conservatives assail the "pacifist" conclusions of the pastoral letter, while liberals, who are disenchanted with the bishops' apparent blessing of nuclear "deterrence," are more urgently alarmed by the process by which the letter was composed and disseminated.

The bishops, for their part, seem impervious to such carefully considered and sympathetic critiques, which, they seem to feel, have either misunderstood the moral-political doctrine articulated in the pastoral or which would impose on the bishops a formula for moral reasoning alien, indeed anathema, to the spirit of Catholicism.

Charting this debate between bishops and their American critics requires agreement on the content of the pastoral, which is not easy to decipher. Salient among its policy recommendations are the following: the prohibition of any militarily meaningful use of the United States' nuclear arsenal, including the tactical and theater nuclear forces currently deployed in Western Europe and Korea, as well as of the strategic forces of the triad (bombers, land-based missiles, and submarine-launched missiles); the tolerance of maintaining the present nuclear arsenal until it can be reduced through verifiable arms control agreements; and the insistence on increasing the conventional (nonnuclear) forces of the United States and its allies unless NATO's present inferiority to the Warsaw Pact forces can be eliminated by negotiating reductions in the Warsaw arsenal. Perhaps most radical of all its conclusions is the pastoral's demand that these imperatives be immediately binding, thus requiring American Catholic military officers who conscientiously agree with the argumentation of the pastoral to withdraw personally from the chain of command to use the nuclear arsenal. The doctrine of the letter is unprecedentedly subversive, aspiring to erode the will of the American people to employ the nuclear arsenal.

The pastoral is calculated, then, to outrage and dismay conservatives who believe that national security is inextricably dependent on the resolve to use the nuclear arsenal in certain highly plausible circumstances—after irreversible conventional battle losses to the Warsaw Pact, for example. The pastoral also disappoints liberals, who assumed that the bishops' radical doctrine condemning all use of the arsenal should likewise have imposed an obligation on the superpowers to dismantle their (morally) useless arsenals. The bishops' anomalous corollary seems to contradict the moral axiom of the letter that condemns all nuclear-war fighting. Critics on the left scold the bishops, then, for letting down the side on arms control, while conservative critics are equally vociferous about the bishops' disservice to national security. The bishops must have been doing something un-American to elicit with the same pastoral letter the earnest and public-spirited dissent of citizens of the right and left extremes of the American political spectrum.

The present essay, which cannot aspire to retrace the give-and-take between the bishops and their critics of both camps, seeks simply to narrate the process that led the bishops into this apparent cultural impasse, where they are forced to defend themselves against the pincer-like charges of un-Americanism in the delicate field of nuclear deterrence. It will become evident in the course of this annotated chronology that the intellectual justification of their unpopular conclusions will be unavailing to persuade either group of critics, conservative or liberal, but will, instead, further compromise their intellectual position in American society by revealing the essentially alien character of the moral reasoning on which the bishops rely. This moral logic will be easier to appreciate in the light of the immediate pre-history of the document, the period from 1963 to 1983.

Francis X. Winters is a professor in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

1963 to 1973

It was the anguish of the Vietnam War that spurred the American Catholic hierarchy to examine its collective conscience on the morality of war. While the bishops had been uniformly indoctrinated with the principles of the "just war theory" (more properly called the "Doctrine of Rights in Warfare") during their seminary training, most of them had not reflected on the significance of this tradition since the closing of their school days. It was the pressure brought to bear on them by young Catholic men of draft age in the 1960s and 1970s that forced some of them, and many young priests later to become bishops, to examine their theological heritage for resources suitable for advising Catholics contemplating conscientious objection to that unpopular war. Although the National Conference of Catholic Bishops never succeeded in voicing a strong corporate dissent to Administration policy during the war, individual bishops offered solitary witness in their own dioceses, and still more were alerted to the applicability of the church's ancient (400 C.E.) tradition about rights in warfare. Some of them, it is fair to assume, vowed at that time never to ignore the relevance of that tradition in the future.

1973 to 1979

The next development that contributed to the letter on war and peace was apparently a random one—the decision of the hierarchy in 1973, in the wake of the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision of the Supreme Court liberalizing American abortion laws, to mount a high-profile political campaign to reverse that decision. This concerted effort to mobilize political opposition to the tide of abortion liberalization has been sustained by the bishops for fifteen years, so far without significant effect on public attitudes toward the "right to life" question. An unforeseen by-product of the bishops' political engagement in the abortion debate, however, has been the opening that their political initiatives offered to members of the hierarchy who had been awakened to the right-to-life dimensions of foreign policy questions during the war in Vietnam. Sensing a chance to bring the authority of the Church and her highly articulated doctrine of the "just war" to bear on the national strategy of nuclear deterrence, some bishops persistently pleaded with other members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to enlarge their right-to-life political campaign by including on their agenda an examination of the moral acceptability of American reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence. This internal campaign to broaden the right-to-life agenda of the bishops began to bear fruit in 1979.

1979 to 1983

Hoping, perhaps, to hide their radical intent, the administrative board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (forty bishops functioning as an executive committee between annual meetings of the hierarchy) appointed John Cardinal Krol, a man of unimpeachable conservative credentials, to announce their decision that condemned the present United States doctrine of nuclear deterrence. They selected, moreover, a venue of predictable obscurity: one of the interminable Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on the now-defunct SALT II Treaty, meeting in September 1979. Krol's statement to the Committee was uncompromising. It was the official teaching of the Roman Catholic church in the United States, he announced, that it is immoral to make any use of the United States' strategic arsenal even in retaliation against prior nuclear attack on the United States by the Soviet Union. This startling challenge to the United States strategic doctrine, which at the time was already thirty years old, went literally unremarked in the hearings. No newspaper or TV news show mentioned Krol's testimony. Six months later, in another sally unlikely to command public attention, Krol summarized his testimony in an article in *America* magazine that drew no more notice than the testimony itself. Determined to attract public attention to their challenge, the bishops voted at the November 1980 annual meeting to appoint Joseph Bernardin (then an archbishop) to chair a committee to prepare a pastoral letter on the topic. The first draft of the letter was circulated privately in June 1982, revised twice, and adopted by a vote of 238 to 9 by the bishops on May 3, 1983. To the amazement of all, most of the bishops included, the final version of the letter was still more radical than Krol's final salvo, broadening the condemnation of nuclear deterrence to prohibit as well any militarily meaningful use of the tactical/theater nuclear weapons in Europe. For an instant, the bishops were media stars, leaving the world wondering how these unambiguously conservative churchmen had wound up on the far left of the American political spectrum, at least on this issue. The answer was simple, if puzzling to the secular observer: religious and moral orthodoxy.

The Secret of Radical Orthodoxy

The overwhelming endorsement by the assembled bishops in May 1983 of the most radical letter ever proposed for the signatures of the American hierarchy can be explained by two factors, as instinctive to bishops as they are suspect to most other Americans: hierarchy and orthodoxy. Church teaching on morality, even in America, is not decided by democratic process but by hierarchical decisions. Curiously, this hierarchical structure of moral discernment in the Roman Catholic church puts certain constraints and instinctive moderation into church teaching, for the bishops' deliberation concerning matters of public policy is guided by their awareness that their pastoral letters are considered by Catholics as binding in conscience. Hence, when bishops vote for or against a draft submitted for a pastoral letter of such moment, they are deliberately expressing not merely their personal views but their judgments about whether such doctrine can be imposed in conscience on the members of the church. This criterion for the adequacy of the doctrine expressed in a pastoral letter thus drives bishops to self-censorship in the light of the church's ancient teaching. To take but two relevant examples from the history of recent episcopal deliberations about deterrence: Archbishop (now Cardinal) O'Connor, who had at the time of the promulgation of the letter recently retired from the rank of Admiral as Chief of Navy Chaplains, could not conceivably have endorsed, even

from this perspective, the standard militaristic viewpoint that national security needs admit no moral constraints. For just-war tradition repudiates such militarism. Conversely, Detroit Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, who is himself a pacifist, would never imagine that he could impose a pacifist creed on all Catholics. Orthodoxy thus channeled the debate between these two intellectual antagonists on the Bernardin committee into areas where a consensus could be shaped moderately enough to win broad endorsement by the whole body of bishops.

It will perhaps be found unremarkable that an orthodox hierarchy is self-censoring. Surely it is worth observing, on the other hand, that such a moral methodology is likewise self-correcting. Evidence of the surprising virtuosity of the just-war methodology employed by the bishops is manifest in the textual history of the peace pastoral itself. In its initial draft (still unpublished), which was circulated among the hierarchy and to certain specialists who had also offered advice to the drafting committee in the course of their deliberations, the pastoral condoned certain types of nuclear-war fighting. Perhaps at the suggestion of one or two of the non-episcopal members of the drafting committee, the original form of the document approved the (supposedly) controlled counterforce use of the strategic arsenal against Soviet targets other than their ICBM silos. This concession was quickly assailed by bishops and others who were consulted on the grounds that this permissive conclusion was incompatible with the clearly expressed skepticism in the same draft about the possibility of controlling even such a "limited" nuclear war. Controllability, the critics reminded the drafting committee, was a *sine qua non* of a moral military strategy, since the traditional just-war restrictions (on legitimate military targets and on the legitimate scale of hostilities) would be moot if the government had lost control of the war. Under this critique of the moral incoherence of the first draft, all passages that had allowed such war fighting were deleted, to be replaced by the imperative reprise: "We must say 'no' to nuclear war." Orthodoxy, then, has its own on-board, self-correcting, precision-guidance system: the inexorable logic of moral imperatives.

If the orthodox moral methodology employed by the hierarchy is admittedly alien to American culture, arguing as it does from the inadmissibility of abortion to the unacceptability of key elements of a generation-old national policy of nuclear deterrence, American culture may have to take a second look at its own moral orthodoxy, which excludes absolute moral principles from legitimate moral-political discourse in favor of a contextual ethic of shared egalitarian discernment. For the Roman Catholic hierarchy's orthodoxy, anathema though it is to the American pragmatic and secular temperament, has at least one significant advantage over secular humanism: It has already generated a moral conclusion about the most urgent problem in human history that seems remarkably sane—the condemnation of all nuclear-war fighting balanced by the provisional tolerance for maintaining the nuclear arsenal as an instrument both of deterrence and of arms-reduction negotiations. If the contextual ethic so congenial to the American culture can boast a comparably sane moral conclusion on the dilemmas of deterrence, that conclusion richly deserves to be more highly touted. •

Making

The Dilemma of

Ernest L. Fortin

Toward the close of Vatican II, a distinguished Protestant theologian observed that, in its endeavor to come to terms with the modern world, the Roman Catholic church was trying to complete in less than five years what Protestantism had failed to accomplish in well over a century. The statement was intended as a friendly warning that the domain into which the bishops had ventured with Vatican II was strewn with pitfalls that the euphoria generated by their deliberations could easily cause them to ignore. The truth of that statement has been amply borne out by more recent developments, not the least notable of which is the church's unprecedented involvement in problems of a directly political nature. In the twenty-odd years that separate us from the end of the Council, the bishops have published more documents dealing with social issues than they did throughout the first two hundred years of their existence as an independent hierarchy.

No one denies that many of these documents—especially the widely publicized pastorals on nuclear warfare and the American economy—represent a substantial contribution to the national debate, which the bishops are eager to elevate by injecting a strong moral note into it. What is less often noticed is that these same documents bring into sharp focus a number of tensions inherent in the church's current position on social matters. My aim is not to defend or criticize that position but to indicate wherein, as I see it, the tensions lie and in what sense the chord sounded in the pastorals and related texts differs from the one to which Catholics were formerly accustomed. With all due respect to the authority of the bishops, I shall argue that their latest teaching is implicitly grounded in a bifurcated anthropology; that it simultaneously pursues two sets of goals that are not easily reconcilable with each other; that it combines traditional Christian doctrine with ideas that once were and may still be fundamentally antithetical to it; in short, that the teaching suffers from a latent bifocalism that puts it at odds with itself and thereby weakens it to a considerable extent.

Ernest L. Fortin is professor of theology at Boston College.

Ends Meet:

Catholic Social Thought

Anyone who reads the new documents against the background of the older ones cannot help but be struck by the overwhelming emphasis that they place on the notion of human rights, the hallmark of modern ethical theory. What once presented itself as first and foremost a doctrine of *duties*—and, hence, of *virtue,* of dedication to the common good of one's society—now takes its bearings, not from what one owes one's fellow human beings, but from what one can claim for oneself. While the pastoral letter on the economy does open with an "outline of the *duties* all people have to each other and to the whole community," the rest of the text makes it clear that these duties are rooted in pre-existing rights that everyone is obliged in conscience to honor and that must therefore be regarded as the primary moral phenomenon.

At first glance, the difference between the two views might be looked upon as one of approach rather than of genuine substance. After all, rights and duties are related to each other. If I have the duty to do something, I must also have the right to do it, although the converse need not be true. Moreover, one can employ a variety of approaches to yield a single result. Climb to the top of Mt. Everest from the north or from the south and you arrive at the same destination, even if one face makes the going easier than the other. Such differences are common in the Christian tradition, indeed, they are largely responsible for the vitality that it has demonstrated across the centuries. The early church fathers were attracted to Plato and found him better adapted to their purpose, which was to implant Christianity in a world that was unfamiliar with it. The medievals, in contrast, preferred Aristotle, whose philosophy was eminently suited to a situation in which Christianity was already fully accredited. No one would describe the two groups as being at loggerheads with each other. The proof is that Aquinas quotes Augustine more than two thousand times in the two *Summae* alone. As Tillich once said, when you cite someone that often with approval, you are not just a friend, you are a disciple.

It is significant that the notion of universal human rights does not occur anywhere in premodern thought and, until very recent times, only sparingly in Roman Catholic thought. The Bible itself, which shares to some degree the perspective of classical philosophy on this point, does not promulgate a "bill of rights"; instead, it issues a set of commandments. For centuries, the cornerstone of Catholic moral theology was not the natural or human *rights* doctrine but something quite different, the natural *law.* Rights, to the extent that they were implied at all, were contingent on the fulfillment of prior duties. Far from being absolute or inalienable, they could be forfeited by an individual who failed to abide by the law that guaranteed them.

To be the best of my knowledge, the true originator of the rights doctrine is Hobbes, from whom it was taken over by virtually all of the great early modern thinkers, including Spinoza, Locke, and Rousseau. Its underlying premise is that, contrary to what had previously been assumed, human beings are not intrinsically ordered to a natural end in the attainment of which they find their happiness or perfection. In Hobbes's own words, "there is no such *finis ultimus,* utmost aim, nor *summum bonum,* greatest good, as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers." Human beings are universally actuated, not by a desire for the good of reason, but by an amoral passion, and not the most noble one at that, to wit, the fear of violent death, which constitutes the sole foundation on which a viable theory of justice can be erected. For, as Hobbes observes elsewhere, "as often as reason is against a man, so often will a man be against reason." To be sure, reason is still involved in the process, but only in an instrumental capacity, that is to say, as a faculty whose function is to "reckon consequences" and, by so doing, ensure one's self-preservation.

This is not to suggest for one moment that the bishops are pure and simple Hobbesians, far from it. Like most contemporary ethicists, they are vastly more influenced by Kant and his latter-day disciples, who managed to give the original rights theory a more exalted status by grounding it, not in a selfish passion, but in practical reason or the dignity of the individual person as an autonomous moral agent. Yet, in the final analysis, Kant's theory is still only a modification of the Hobbesian theory. Virtue, although desirable, is not essential to the scheme, and one need not acquire it in order to reap its benefits. Human beings may stay as they are as long as the laws under which they live are as they ought to be. The only condition is that these laws be equally favorable to everyone, to scoundrels no less than to saints. Wars will disappear, according to Kant, not because their atrocities offend one's moral sense, but because with the progress of modern science they are rapidly becoming too costly, if not downright suicidal. Commerce will curb the spread of religious fanaticism and bind people together more closely than ever before. A strong league of nations will insure the proper relations among the peoples of the world, and a day is coming when no one will have to worry about sacrificing himself for the good of others. In Kant's famous phrase, the perfectly just society does not require that the bulk of the citizens be angels or even minimally decent human beings; it can be made up entirely of "devils," on the condition that they be intelligent. The key to its proper functioning is not genuine moral virtue, on which one can rarely depend, but enlightened self-interest.

I am well aware that the preceding account of the relationship between premodern and modern ethical thought runs counter to what is still far and away the most fashionable view among present-day scholars, the majority of whom look upon

the rights doctrine as nothing more than a perfected version of the old natural-law doctrine. According to that interpretation, there is no real breach of continuity between premodern and modern thought. The latter is a child of the former, whose intention it does not oppose but rather seeks to fulfill more effectively. Such was the position taken a short generation ago by Jacques Maritain and John Courtney Murray, and such also is the one taken in our day by John Finnis and Felicien Rousseau, to name only a few Catholic thinkers who speak for a host of others in this regard. It is emphatically not the position taken by the early modern thinkers themselves, all of whom were firmly convinced that, like Columbus, they had discovered a new continent and stood on fundamentally different ground. At its deepest level modernity owed nothing of importance to either the classical or the Christian tradition, from which it was separated by an abyss. The issue was stated with the utmost clarity in the eighteenth century by Jonathan Swift, who in his *Battle of the Books* pictured the two camps as solidly entrenched each on its own summit, which neither was willing to surrender to the other. It is only with Hegel and, some years later, with Nietzsche that a powerful attempt was made to bridge the chasm between them by showing that the modern world was nothing other than the culmination of a process that had been unfolding since the dawn of history or, in Nietzsche's case, since the dawn of philosophic consciousness. And it is from them that the unitary conception of the development of Western thought was passed on to assorted philosophers and historians down to our time.

We can gain a clearer understanding of what is at stake here if, by way of illustration, we glance at some specific issues with which the bishops have been confronted. One of these is abortion, the case against which, not surprisingly, they now base on "the rights of the unborn." Earlier theologians would have begun by asking, not what abortion does to the fetus, but what it does to the people who perform and undergo it. Duties would have taken precedence over rights and determined the conduct that was appropriate in a given set of circumstances. The more complex the case, the more it would call for deliberation in the light of certain general principles that remain the same at all times but whose degree of applicability varies greatly from one instance to another. Considerable room was thus left for prudence. The same cannot always be said for the argument from rights, which deprives us of the ability to determine in a principled way which of two supposedly unconditional rights, that of the mother or that of the unborn child, has the green light when they come into conflict with each other.

Nor is this all. On the ground that all human life is sacred, some bishops have been invoking the same principle to ban not only abortion but nuclear warfare and capital punishment as well. Actions as disparate as the taking of an innocent life, the execution of a vicious criminal, and the defense of one's country against a foreign invader have been lumped together and condemned in the name of a would-be "consistent ethic of life." Perhaps there are no ready-made solutions to any of these problems, but even a morally sensitive person may find it strange to see them treated as if they were identical.

A similar problem arises when the church tries to deal with theologians who dissent from its official teaching. Having endorsed the principles of freedom of conscience and freedom of expression, the bishops have been hard pressed to defend the sanctions imposed by Rome on some of the dissenters. How can one publicly proclaim the rights of the individual conscience and then take action against a person who exercises them? It might be replied that the church, too, has its rights, which need to be defended when they are infringed. But, never having been spelled out with the same degree of precision, these rights remain less compelling than those claimed by and guaranteed to the individual person. The problem becomes even more acute when one considers that the dissenter is himself a member of the organization whose rights are being urged against him. All of this is to say that the church is paying a high price for espousing the principles of the Enlightenment.

My last series of comments concerns the bishops' teaching on the economy and their so-called "preferential option for the poor," one of the pivots of that teaching, where the argument is again made predominantly in terms of rights. One can hardly fault the bishops for wanting to do something about the scandalous persistence of pauperism in the midst of our society. On this score, they are merely heeding the injunctions of the Bible, which, as they correctly point out, evinces a good deal of concern for the poor, the afflicted, and the underprivileged. Unlike the bishops, however, the Bible never goes so far as to propose that something might be owed to them simply by reason of their poverty. Here, as elsewhere, it looks at the problem from the standpoint of the doer rather than the beneficiary of the righteous deed. It is the good Samaritan who is indebted, not the man who had fallen among thieves, for he has been given an opportunity to serve. The thrust of the New Testament message is that the Christian, who has received everything from God, must imitate Him by sharing his superfluous goods with those who lack the necessities of life. The poverty about which it speaks is more often than not spiritual poverty, which sometimes goes hand in hand with material poverty but which cannot be equated with it. God wants all people to be saved, the rich as well as the poor.

It is true, as the bishops likewise remind us, that Jesus himself lived in ten-thousandfold poverty and did not have a stone on which to rest his head; but it is also true that he had some rich friends, whom he does not condemn and of whose hospitality he was quite willing to avail himself. And he apparently had no qualms about allowing his equally improvident disciples to steal a few ears of corn from neighboring fields from time to time. Imagine what human society would be like if everybody were to live like that! On balance, one is almost tempted to say that the Bible is more concerned with the rich than with the poor; they are the ones who need the most help. Indeed, if the poor are really closer to God, how can one justify relieving them of their poverty?

Even more striking is the fact that the New Testament has nothing at all to say about the reform of social structures or the establishment of institutions geared to the relief of human misery. What the bishops and others today call "social justice"—as distinguished from, say, legal justice—is a nineteenth-

"Actions as disparate as the taking of an innocent life, the execution of a vicious criminal, and the defense of one's country against a foreign invader have been lumped together by the bishops and condemned in the name of a would-be 'consistent ethic of life.' "

century invention usually attributed to the Roman Catholic theologian Taparelli d'Azeglio, who never bothered to clarify its meaning and thus created a problem with which social ethicists have had to struggle ever since. The pedigree of that ill-fated notion can easily be traced to Rousseau, who called for a total reform of society along egalitarian lines. The change was a momentous one. Prior to that time, everybody took it for granted that one was rewarded by society in the measure of one's services to it. Widows, orphans, and the victims of undeserved misfortune were obviously to be cared for, but they presented a special case demanding special treatment. Rousseau went further, stipulating that rewards were to be meted out on the basis of need rather than merit. The less one was in a position to contribute to society, the more one could expect from it. Compassion rather than reason became the stamp of human dignity. The battle cry was taken up by countless authors throughout the century that followed. In the *Legend of the Centuries,* Victor Hugo could say of a horse that steps aside to avoid trampling a toad: "Wiser than Socrates and greater than Plato"—*Plus sage que Socrate et plus grad que Platon.* But compassion, for all its attractiveness, is still, as its name indicates, a *passion.* It is only distantly related to what the Christian tradition calls "mercy" and "charity," both of which, as virtues, require the control of reason.

But if social, rather than personal, reform is the key to the problems of civil society, training in virtue loses much of its importance. There is no real need to dwell on it, and in fact the bishops show relatively little interest in it. Like their modern predecessors, they appear to have more faith in institutions. The list of concrete proposals to which more than half of their pastoral on the economy is dedicated, for example, includes such specific items as tax-reform, the reform of the international economic system, the right to employment, trade unions, farm policy, food distribution, cooperation among firms and industries, national and international cooperation, welfare programs, job-training and job-creation programs, and foreign investments.

Part of the danger is that the vast amount of time, energy, and resources devoted to practical issues of this sort risks being interpreted as a tacit acquiescence in what Robert Nisbet has described as the demise of transcendental Christianity. One begins to wonder whether the bishops have not abandoned their most important task for the sake of a possibly more urgent one.

It is curious that bishops, whose first duty is to preach the gospel, should suddenly have become so obsessed with problems that Christianity has always identified as the proper province of the civil authorities. As a professor of Catholic theology, I find it regrettable that I cannot recommend their texts to my students without inviting a minor disaster. In the vast majority of cases, these students come away from them with the feeling that they can do better by reading the works of experts on the subject. Whatever gems of Christian wisdom may be imbedded in them are lost in a maze of academic detail and references that only a specialist or a born masochist would care to look up. By contrast, the same students respond with enthusiasm to books like Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind,* which give them an inkling of what the world would be like if we were all better human beings or of what they could see in it if they themselves were to become better human beings. It surprises them that bishops, whom they still look up to, should spend so much time talking about self-preservation (as they do in the letter on nuclear warfare) and about comfortable self-preservation (as they do in the letter on the economy), and so little time talking about the love of the good and the beautiful. True, young students are not necessarily the best judges of these matters; but then, I have not detected much more enthusiasm for the bishops' statements among any of my older acquaintances.

I began by suggesting that the bishops' recent teachings were predicated on a bifurcated anthropology, one part of which reflects a teleological and the other a nonteleological view of nature. It might be more accurate to say that it suffers from the lack of any definite anthropology. A pastoral letter is admittedly not the best place to engage in remote philosophic disquisitions about the nature of the human being, but one would nonetheless expect its authors to exhibit a greater awareness of the theoretical implications of the doctrines expounded in it. It is no accident that the bishops have failed to win the wholehearted support of at least two groups of sympathetic critics within their own fold: the Neo-Conservatives, who agree with them about the end or ends pursued in their letters but disagree with them about the means to those ends, and a smaller and less noisy band of scholars who perversely insist that there can be no fruitful discussion of the means unless the ends themselves are first clarified. My point, and it is the only one I have tried to make, is that the bishops may have confused some of their readers by using language that looks in two different directions at once: that of rights or freedom on one hand, and of virtue, character-formation, and the common up their vigorous defense of rights, especially since the collapse of Neo-Thomism in the wake of Vatican II has left them without any alternative on which to fall back; but they have yet to tell us, or tell us more clearly, how the two ends are supposed to meet. Reading their letters reminds me of a little ditty my gang used to sing when I was a kid:

I love Carolina,
I love Angelina too.
I can't marry both,
So what I gonna do? •

Humanism, Religion, and Authority

Daniel C. Maguire

I begin this article on the eternal triangle of religion, humanism, and authority with three principles up front: (1) Religions are bearers and communicators of moral ideals, and no serious humanist or student of the history of morals can ignore them; (2) the ecumenism between religious and nonreligious humanism is natural and need not even be clumsy, since many of the same basic moral ideals are bodied forth in both systems in different symbols; (3) religions, like all human groups, have problems with authority, and their problems must be of interest to all humanists.

With that said, I turn to the question of authority.

There is in Vietnam a religion known as Cao Dai. This religion has been of special interest since it began in 1919 as an effort to syncretize the fundamentals of Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity within a kind of Roman Catholic organization involving cardinals and other hierarchs. Cao Dai teaches that the divine contacts human minds through concrete media. Prominent in this mediation is the *corbeille à bec,* a bag with a beaklike projection. In the principal temple at Tay Ninh, this bag is held by two members of the Law Protective Body over a board that contains all the letters of the alphabet. After the manner of a Ouija board, the beaked bag, by bobbing toward certain letters will, it is hoped, produce a message or even some verses; and these constitute revelation. This must occur at the main temple to be valid. Such, then, is the way of the Cao Dai.

Next, in pursuit of the topic, I turn from the Cao Dai to a pointed narrative starring my son, Tommy. The story begins on a bright September day when Tommy was about three years of age. It had become clear to me that Tommy had no recollection of the phenomenon of autumn. I came upon him at the den window, with his cloth dog, Patches, in his arms. "Tommy," I inquired, "what color are those leaves out there?" The thumb emerged from the mouth and he replied with perfect accuracy: "Green." I then broke the news that in a few weeks all those leaves would turn from green to red, yellow, orange, and brown, and they would all fall off the trees. The thumb again left the mouth, and Tommy looked up at me with what I interpreted as stunned incredulity. I was wrong. Two days later I was passing the den and heard Tommy conversing with Patches. He was announcing to his special friend that all the leaves were going to change. He had memorized the forthcoming colors: "Red, yellow, orange, and brown, and all fall down!" His faith in my prediction was complete. I realized that at that point in Tommy's psychic history I could have announced that the trees would soon be lifted out of the earth and suspended in air and still I would have found a true believer.

Dan Maguire is professor of theology at Marquette University. His most recent book is The Moral Revolution *(Harper & Row).*

Having watched two children be born, I am convinced that the question on the tortured face as it emerges from the birth canal is: "What the hell is going on!" That question is the beginning of all philosophy and theology. The peace of womb-life is suddenly and shockingly interrupted, and the newborn arrive with pained questions in their eyes.

In early cognitive life, there are two, and only two, sources of answers to those questions: sense experience and authority. Sense experience is impressive. Crawlers and toddlers learn quickly that ovens are hot and floors are hard and ice is cold. Sense knowledge would seem overwhelming were it not that authority is more impressive yet. Tommy's faith experience illustrated that, to emerging consciousness, the authority of the caretakers is supreme. When it contradicts sense experience—the leaves *were* green and looked as though they would stay that way—sense experience, with all its immediacy and clarity, yields to authority. Gradually, and even early on, critical intelligence is born and submission to authority gives way to considered, evaluative judgment. Nevertheless, each of us bears within us a stubborn, seductive memory of a time when chaos was banished before the light of our infallible authorities. The lure of such simplistic comfort is buried, though not irretrievably, in the recesses of our minds. This infantile security might later be sought in a cult leader, a pope, or Bible magically interpreted, or in a *corbeille à bec.* We are left to wonder at how otherwise-sophisticated people can be prey to such uncritical naïveté.

The fact is that the mind cannot bear a vacuum of meaning, and in our rush for meaning we will be more credulous than we should be. Two centuries ago, Adam Smith put it well: "The man scarce lives who is not more credulous than he ought to be. . . . The natural disposition is always to believe. It is acquired wisdom and experience only that teach incredulity, and they very seldom teach it enough."[1]

This natural proclivity to uncritical credulity is powerfully visible in religious contexts. Where the aura of the sacred accrues, there is a tendency for critical judgment to succumb to awe. When a rich moral vision appears under religious auspices, this awe can produce good. Authoritative writings appear in

most religions: the Vedas of the Hindus, the Koran of the Muslims, the Dhamma of the Buddhists, the Bible of the Christians, and the biblical and talmudic writings of the Jews. Religions have met a socially felt need in spelling out the meaning and shape of the good life. As Karl Mannheim writes, "In every society there are social groups whose special task it is to provide an interpretation of the world for that society. . . . Thus the magicians, the Brahmins, the medieval clergy are to be regarded as intellectual strata, each of which in its society enjoyed a monopolistic control over the molding of that society's worldview. . . ."[2] In a word, we want our authority, and we find it.

My point is not that authority is hostile to intelligence. Indeed, intelligence, to grow toward wisdom, must learn the art of reliance.[3] Because the mind is fallible and finite it needs reliable authorities as supplements and extensions. An open and growing mind has good antennae. It listens and relies well. Authority is no threat to free inquiry. Indeed, all inquiry, however free, operates with authorities. Such is the law of the mind.

In many ways, Judeo-Christianity has functioned as an enriching authority in Western cultures, and we are, one and all of us, in its debt. Permit me here to dare to sound the trumpet of praise for Christianity as a beneficent cultural authority. Judeo-Christianity gave stimulus to the growth of science and technology with its claim that human beings were made in the image of the creator-God and with its take-charge anthropology, which sees us as stewards of the earth, as "participants of divine providence,"[4] and as co-creators and co-redeemers of the evolutionary process. The Judeo-Christian stress on concern for the poor and the dispossessed has influenced Western theories of socialism and social-welfare policy. The primitive Christian egalitarianism, which attacked the hostile distinctions between free and slave, Hebrew and Greek, male and female (Gal. 3:28), has the authority of a radical, sociopolitical ideal. Biblical social idealism functioned as an

authority in the early history of the American republic. The modern ideal of the university was born of Christians in twelfth-century Paris, Oxford, and Bologna. Although Christianity has produced devout experts in despotism, the Christian-university movement sought to free the mind from the false authority of bishop, king, and parliament. All of this was seminal and ovarian to the modern ideal of academic freedom. (Ironically, the pope and the bishops who attack academic freedom today are actually attacking a good Catholic and Christian tradition opposing despotic control of the mind.) Hannah Arendt credited the Christian symbol of immortality with charging the ancient world with a fresh vision of the supreme dignity of the person.[5] Modern bills of rights are an echo of this radical aggrandizement of the dignity of the individual person in the face of the seemingly immortal Leviathan of government.

In all of this, religion functioned as an authority—and we are all the better for it. As a Judeo-Christian philosopher-theologian I seek in every compatible way to extend the influence of the Hebrew and Christian essential moral creed. There is a need for this kind of authentic authority to enlarge the paltry self-image of much of humankind, and I hope that the authority of this essential moral vision grows.

As scripture scholar Gerd Theissen says, we need not look for the missing link in evolution. We *are* the missing link. The humanity that produced the Holocaust and the arms race and unalleviated hunger is not the normative humanity we hope for. Authoritative visions are needed to beckon us to more salubrious horizons of humanhood. The Jewish Jesus movement has much to offer a world in terminal peril. It offers critical epoch-turning ideals—and ideals are the gentlest form of authority. The asperities of the evolutionary process taught us that identification with the powerful is the way to survival. The Jesus movement suggests that this is a false law, that identification with the weak and the outcast is the real and only road to security and Shalom. We will be well served if that ideal—which is not very visible in most of corrupt Christianity—becomes authoritative and controlling within and without Christianity. The new and vigorous "liberation theology" is a step in this direction.

Ideals, of course, have rough births, and historical Christianity has not incarnated its ideals. It has sinned especially in the area of intrusive and unjust authority. Religions are prone to the twin pitfalls of *magic* and *oracularity*. Religion confronts mystery and mystery threatens the littleness of our minds. Oracles relieve us of mystery. Rather than struggle with mystery, we fashion a *corbeille à bec*. Oracular authority purveys more certitude than is available. It gives to an officer or a book or a beaked bag a power each does not have. It indulges in a false concretizing of the criteria of truth. It pampers our primeval, infantile need for infallibility. When I told the very young, precritical Tommy that I, his chauffeur, was lost, he replied: "You kidding, Daddy." His pope had to be infallible. Who needs a lost pope or an erring oracle?

Because we live at the brink of chaos the appeal of oracular magic is strong. We long for a tidy orthodoxy and for inerrant keepers of captured truth. The fervor that greets the pope in the first, second, and third worlds contains something of all of

this. In a world awash in inexplicability, the unduly certain have a signal charm.

In Christianity, the oracular temptation has had other stimuli. Judeo-Christianity contains a dangerous and subversive memory, a challenging dream of lost alternatives. Oracular authorities might offer us a less alarming vision. They might soothe and cover up our failure of nerve. They might substitute an abstemious concern for pelvic morality (as the Christian hierarchy has since its fourth-century Council of Elvira) for a prophetic commitment to social justice.

Overstating the case a bit, G. K. Chesterton once said that Christianity has not failed, it simply has not been tried. Kierkegaard said that, while Luther had ninety-five theses, he had only one: Christianity has not been made a reality. In equally sweeping but blunter terms, the Jesus movement aborted and oracular authorities have acted as the abortifacient. The oracles were less demanding than the original vision.

There is yet another cause of our hunger for oracles. The historical religions were in their essence a great birthing of consciousness. The devotees of these religions have found values they hold as precious. They are in love with a vital value source. Of course, the shadow side of any great love is fear of loss. Authority, falsely concretized in palpable form, promises security and insurance against this loss.

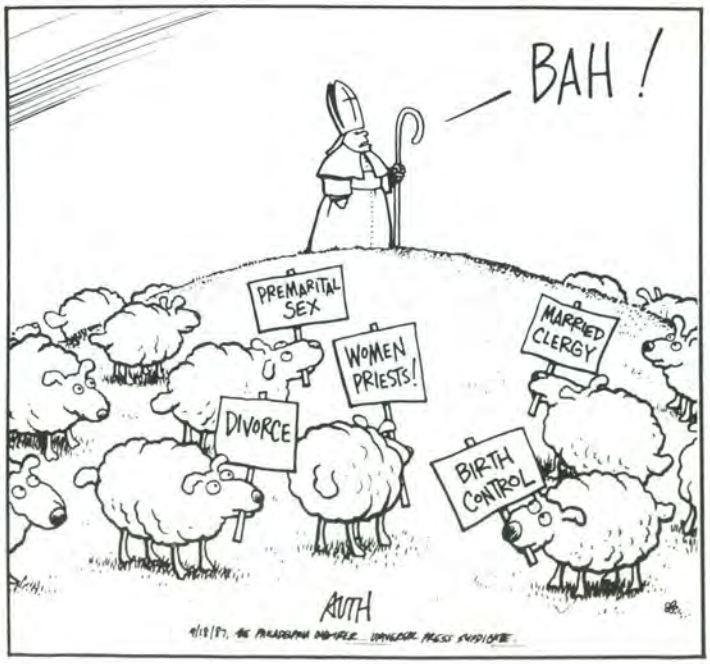
For all these reasons and more, historical Christianity has been beset by magical oracles in the form of biblical and hierarchical fundamentalism. There is a great irony in this tragedy: The church has adopted the very authoritarian tyranny that Jesus died protesting. Modern biblical scholars are parsimonious in conceding the historicity or authenticity of gospel sayings or deeds of Jesus, but Jesus' statement on authority and his attack on the temple are widely seen as authentic, and I think that the two link. Part of the moral revolution in which Jesus starred is found in Mark 7:42: "You know that in the world the recognized rulers lord it over their subjects, and their great men make them feel the weight of authority. This is not to be the way with you; among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all." Those words had to sting the high priests of orthodoxy, who reigned over the consciences of the people. But what had to sting them even more was the symbolic attack on the temple. Contrary to erstwhile common interpretation, this was not a cleansing mission intent on correcting shady business practices in the temple shops. New scholarship argues that Jesus was challenging the authority of the temple and its high priests. He was relativizing the magisterial authority of the temple by predicting its replacement. In a literal *and* symbolic sense he was overturning the tables of the Vatican of his day. He was attacking the assumed authority of high priestly men in the name of the transcendence of God. Many scholars now argue that the high priests had him killed within hours or days after this assault on those who were presuming to "lord it over" the poor.

There is an especial irony in oracular fundamentalism in Catholic Christianity. In the healthier moments of the high church tradition, the search for truth rested on a tripod: the hierarchy, the laity, and the research theologians. A monopod approach to truth, as recommended by the temple of the Vatican, is destined by the very laws of physics to collapse. Only mutually respectful and corrective cooperation of all three fallible pods could serve the truth-search and integrity of Catholic Christianity. The Vatican's effort to claim a monopod authority is heretical to the best in the Jesus movement, and it must be condemned as roundly as any other tyranny. It is the corruption of something good and should be called by its name.

Humanists, whether theistic or atheistic in their inferences, all agree with Arnold Toynbee that "human life and its setting are mysteries."[6] That we are here in this little corner of the universe with roses, babies, and minds is a fact planted in mystery. Religious humanists attempt to name that mystery. Their efforts to do so are modest and do not dissipate the mystery. They must stand with Thomas Aquinas in saying that the highest form of knowledge of God is of God "as the unknown."[7] The gentle effort of religious humanists to name the mystery in their humanistic quest for meaning, however, should threaten no one. All humanists say with Erasmus that nothing human is alien to us. We all look to the flourishing of this good life on this earth. And we all look to the banishment of execrable tyrannies. *Procedamus ergo in pace:* let us proceed, therefore, in peace.

Notes

1. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966), pp. 494–95.
2. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), p. 10.
3. See Daniel C. Maguire, *The Moral Choice* (San Francisco, New York: Harper & Row-Winston, 1979), pp. 261–80.
4. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III q. 91, a. 2, in corp.
5. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1959) p. 287.
6. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Change and Habit* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 14.
7. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis,* 11, ad 3. •



The Vatican and the Catholic Couple

Robert T. Francoeur

The Catholic church constantly speaks of the importance of the mature Christian's individual conscience. Yet, when it comes to sexual issues, the church constantly emphasizes absolute prohibitions that seem at best unrelated, and at worst contradictory, to the everyday experiences and values of Catholics. As a sexologist, embryologist, and Catholic priest, I have puzzled over this apparent contradiction in Catholic sexual morality for more than twenty-five years.

Last spring a Catholic monsignor joined me on a radio talk show to discuss the dispute between the Sterns and Mary Beth Whitehead, the surrogate mother of "Baby M." During the taping the monsignor inadvertently gave me an invaluable insight into the way the church deals with questions of sexual, marital, and reproductive freedom. I realized then that Catholic teachings on sexuality hinge on three perspectives. First, according to the papal throne the everyday sexual and marital experiences of the average Catholic are irrelevant. Second, the Catholic hierarchy and laity commonly have adopted diametrically opposing world-views in articulating their sexual moralities. And third, the two camps speak from different levels of moral development.

With these three perspectives highlighted up front, let me return to the monsignor and the first perspective.

Definitions from Armchair Moralists

According to the monsignor, who spoke with authority for the official Catholic position, the church's condemnation of artificial insemination and surrogate motherhood is clear and unchangeable. These possibilities, he stated, clearly violate the natural functions of human sexuality and the divinely ordained exclusivity of marriage. He quickly added that this condemnation was supported by the findings of modern psychology, which stresses the importance of "normal development" in the bonding between parent and child. Because surrogate motherhood separates the roles of biological and social parents, it necessarily adds considerable complexity and ambiguity to the bonding experience. Responding to this, I said that I suspected it was the disastrous management and publicity of the Baby M case that would probably result in real psychological and emotional problems for both the Stern and Whitehead families. Nonetheless, as a free-inquiring scientist I was anxious to learn whether the monsignor knew of any studies that had uncovered actual evidence of unnatural or harmful bonding in any of the many childless couples who have used these medical procedures. Had Vatican officials actually spoken to surrogate mothers and the families who have used these technologies to find out what their experiences were? Did they interview, for instance, the childless wife whose sister had been artificially inseminated with her brother-in-law's semen and in Christian charity served as a surrogate mother for the couple? Because the two sisters and the husband had talked openly about their experiences in terms of love, fidelity, marriage, bonding, and child-rearing, their personal experiences would certainly be vitally important in any serious assessment of the benefits, risks, and morality of surrogate motherhood.

The monsignor did not see any need for such evidence. Whether such couples find that such experiences reinforce their marital love and the vitality of their families is truly irrelevant; the church already knows "the truth" about all forms of human parenting.

I reminded the monsignor of those nineteenth-century religious and medical authorities who had condemned the use of anesthesia in childbirth. They were convinced that an infant would instinctively know that its mother did not—and could not—love it if she had not suffered in the delivery as Genesis said mothers must suffer. But, when Queen Victoria later used anesthesia during her labor and delivery, the male medical and church authorities found it best to change their definition of maternal-infant bonding; the testimony of a woman, the Queen and the head of the Church of England, demolished their earlier presumptive definition. The monsignor said this comparison

Robert T. Francoeur is professor of human sexuality at Fairleigh Dickinson University and the author of many books on sexuality, including the highly acclaimed college textbook, Becoming a Sexual Person *(Macmillan).*

was irrelevant.

I then described a marvelous picture from a Victorian-era physician's guide that showed "the proper demeanor" for a doctor examining a female patient. Genuflecting before the woman, who is wearing a full-length dress, the physician diverts his gaze away from her while his arms blindly probe her "private parts." Since medical texts authoritatively told the Victorian doctor what he would find in his groping, talking with the patient was a waste of time, completely "irrelevant" to the practice of good medicine.

In responding to the perplexing ethical questions and dilemmas raised by our rapid advances in all areas of sexual relations and contraceptive and reproductive technologies, the Vatican is content to follow in the tradition of the Victorian physicians. Pope John Paul II and the Vatican officials who condemn contraception, reproductive technologies, and homosexual relations believe they have nothing to gain by talking or listening to childless couples and surrogate mothers, to married couples who have integrated contraceptive family-planning into their marital love, or to homosexual men and women with personal experiences of loving relations.

I believe this tradition of not listening is at the heart of the many disputes over sexual morality that have divided the Catholic community since Vatican II. While the authorities believe they have divinely revealed answers, many of the Catholic laity, theologians, and clergy are not at all sure what the answers are—they must struggle with the questions in their own lives, in their loving and parenting relations.

In other areas of morality, Catholics might be willing to accept the top-down moral teachings of the hierarchy. But in the area of sexual morality they know their personal, everyday experiences are not only valuable but essential to any valid moral appraisal of their sexual relations, be they heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual; marital, premarital, or postmarital; procreative, contraceptive, or abortive. Given this personal perspective and intimate involvement, the majority of Catholics today respect and love the pope but completely reject his armchair pronouncements on sexual morality.

The Philosophical Conflict of Two World-Views

The Vatican has never resolved its centuries-old tension between the Judaic biblical world-view, in which time is developmental and linear, and the Platonic/Aristotelian world-view, in which time is cyclic. The Vatican remains trapped in what Mircea Eliade called "the myth of the eternal return."[1] In the linear time of the biblical vision, creation is an epigenetic, *evolutionary* process wherein the very nature and essence of things are caught up in the process of being created. In the Vatican's archetypal world, however, all change is superficial illusion, everything having already been established "in the beginning." Indeed, according to this view, creation itself is nothing more than the unfolding of eternal archetypes (*eidos*).

Fifty years ago, Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit evolutionist and paleontologist, sought to integrate Catholic theology and spirituality with the scientific evolution. Pius XII had decided that "monogenism," the descent of humankind from a single primal pair, was what might now be termed an "informally infallible" doctrine. Darwinian evolution and, by implication, Teilhard's evolutionary synthesis were therefore heretical. Rather than consider the evolutionary world-view, the Vatican exiled Teilhard to the wilderness of the Gobi Desert in Outer Mongolia.

Years later, however, Teilhard's evolutionary spirit burst forth in the deliberations of Vatican II. This influence manifested itself in the majority report of the postcounciliar commission on the moral acceptability of artificial contraception. Pope Paul VI rejected this report, however, in his encyclical *Humani vitae*. Unfortunately, John Paul II and the magisterium have continued to ignore the sensus fidelium expressed by 68 percent of American Catholic couples, who are convinced that artificial contraception can be morally integrated within the context of married love.

In the 1920s, Teilhard pictured the human race floating on a raft in the middle of the ocean. He imagined some of the people on the raft looking at their feet, telling everyone that "nothing is changing; everything is the way it always was." These immobilist doctrinaires have no problem defining the world as they know it must be. The others, however, see a very different world; they are constantly studying the ever-changing horizons. Today, it is the Vatican moralists who are still looking at their feet. They ignore reality in their statements on the "intrinsically disordered" orientation of contraception, reproductive technologies, and homosexuality. Moreover, the Vatican is not listening to views on scientific and sexual issues that diverge from its "informally infallible" definitions.

The Vatican's world-view is clearly rooted in its Aristotelian notion that God created the world from above and outside. The hierarchy thus becomes the custodian of divine creation—awaiting the return of the Infinite Museum Owner. (Remember the parable of the careful servant who dug a hole and hid the master's money, Matthew 25.) On the other hand, many Catholics who struggle to be good and faithful servants run risks in order to return more than that with which they were entrusted. They take their inspiration from the Spirit and Word that move through matter. They are the creators who—through faith and human experience—strive to make considered judgments and take responsible actions that contribute to the unfolding of the ultimate Kingdom. While the curators make rules for behavior in the museum, the creators strive to bring forth living art works that will decorate the Kingdom.

The quite different conclusions that come from this conflict between finished and unfinished creations are the ultimate reason the Vatican was so quick to condemn the study of sexual morality commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America. Despite the condemnation, repeated surveys indicate that the study reflects the thinking of the majority of American Catholics. So, these questions become the key ones: Who constitutes the church? Who really reflects the vitality of God's revelation?

Nowhere in recent Christian thought on Genesis and human sexuality is the contrast between world-views and the understanding of creation more striking than in the contrast between the Vatican's positions on sexual morality and the "Report of the Task Force on Changing Patterns of Sexuality and Family Life" prepared for study at the request of the Eleventh Conven-

tion of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, New Jersey, in early 1987.

> The Judeo-Christian tradition is a tradition precisely because, in every historical and social circumstance, the thinking faithful have brought to bear the best interpretation of the current realities in correlation with their interpretation of tradition as they have inherited it. Thus, truth in the Judeo-Christian tradition is a dynamic process to be discerned and formulated rather than a static structure to be received. The Bible is misunderstood and misused when approached as a book of moral prescriptions directly applicable to all moral dilemmas. Rather, the Bible is the record of the response to the word of God addressed to Israel and to the church throughout centuries of changing social, historical, and cultural conditions. The faithful responded within the realities of their particular situation, guided by the direction of previous revelation, but not captive to it.

Those who try to define life, human nature, and human experience are attempting to limit what life, nature, and experience can give to us. The illusion of their power remains intact only as long as their definitions and their authority to define are widely accepted. At least from the finite human vantage point, even God did not choose to define creation, choosing rather to create through the evolutionary process and, in the present age, continuing to create with human collaboration. The only definition of life truly acceptable to Christian thought is the Kingdom of God that has not yet fully come. Those who would define life maintain that they rule over the Kingdom—rather than serve as custodians of its keys in an ongoing creation. The Vatican has thus usurped the prerogative of the divine, implicity denied the Incarnation, and rejected the Word Who is becoming flesh. The Vatican is itself heretical.

The Tension Between Two Moral Languages

The Vatican and the hierarchy speak as though God specifically revealed to them the answer to every moral dilemma or question humans might think of between the first and second comings of Christ. Since they have all the divinely revealed answers, there is no need to seek new insights or to debate the value of new answers. Catholics need only faithfully consent to the black-and-white answers the Vatican teaches. No issue of sexual or reproductive morality could possibly arise for which the celibate Vatican clerics do not already have the right answer. Yet, many Catholics nonetheless believe we are facing radically new situations, situations that were inconceivable to the authors of the New Testament, ones that demand creative solutions and apply perennial principles in new ways. It is no surprise that some of our answers would have been unthinkable to Christians in previous eras.

Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Carole Gilligan have described moral development and thinking in terms of three levels or languages.[2] The first level is "egocentric morality," in which a child responds to cultural rules and labels imposed from outside by a higher authority. On this level, right and wrong are interpreted in terms of the rewards and punishments attached to particular actions. On the second level, "heteronomous morality," definitions of good and bad are rooted in respect for an outside authority and conformity to that authority. (Albert Ellis has termed these two levels of morality "MUSTurbation.") On the third level—"autonomous morality," —individuals discern and apply moral values on their own, no longer blindly following authorities who guided their culture and religion in the past.

These moral languages have been instructively applied to religious institutions.[3] As with fundamentalist Christian sects, the Vatican works on the first and second levels of morality, imposing its definitions on Catholics. But more and more Catholics are operating on the third level. The autonomous Catholic will question and even reject the hierarchy's rules when it fails to consider the experience of those on whom it seeks to impose rules for life and faith. And this is what has taken place with regard to the Vatican's pronouncements on sexual morality since the Vatican II Council.

Among "third level faithful," whether married or single, heterosexual or homosexual, there is a clear effort to be at once consistent with their faith, their experience, and the history and traditions of the Christian community. While this striving to become a responsible adult can put a Catholic at odds with the "higher authority" of the ruling hierarchy, it must draw on the judgments and teachings of that authority, which all Catholics accept as necessary and legitimate. Unfortunately, in its pervasively autocratic attitude, the Vatican refuses to join in a serious dialogue with the third-level faithful.

Religious Disobedience

Where does all this leave the sexual, contraceptive, and reproductive freedoms and responsibilities of Catholics? As we review John Paul II's tour of the United States, the image we get is of an ancient shepherd who has come to scold the faithful for their modern "cafeteria style, pick-and-choose" approach to Catholic doctrine and discipline. I would argue that this picture is an oversimplified and distorted appraisal of where we are. We Catholics are painfully trying to solve three problems.

We have the tension between a patriarchal hierarchy that claims to know all the answers and a laity and clergy who are trying to explore the still-untapped variety of human sexualities and apply eternal principles of love in their daily lives. Catholics can describe how contraceptives have helped them become responsible and loving parents, how they've been able to integrate non-reproductive intercourse with the reproductive acts of intercourse. Gay Catholics can describe their efforts to incarnate Christian love in their unions. And childless couples, sperm donors, and surrogate mothers can describe how Christian love has motivated their actions. But this accomplishes little if the pope and the hierarchy deny the very reality of these experiences. We all suffer when the Vatican's definitions of sexuality trap and chain the creative human spirit. We also suffer when our religious authorities refuse to recognize that we are no longer children but responsible, thinking, and mature adults.

The Vatican is trying to reverse time. In calling for a halt to the spirit of creativity that John XXIII released when he threw

open the church windows in the Second Vatican Council, John Paul II is forcing Catholicism back into the crysalis. But the metamorphosis of Catholicism will continue. Indeed, I believe a new Catholic church has already begun to emerge. There will not be a formal schism, as there was in the Reformation. But we can already see the church split into three incarnations. There is and will continue to be a small community of Catholics who adhere to the Latin liturgy and Vatican I orthodoxy. There is and will be a middle-of-the-road conservative community of Catholics who adhere to the pope and Vatican pronouncements in minute detail. And everywhere around the world there is an increasingly large number of Catholics—perhaps a majority—who exercise their own consciences while refusing to give up their Catholic heritage and faith. Like Father Charles Curran at Catholic University, Hans Kung, Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, and countless others, they will not be thrown out of the Catholic church.

If this sounds like the Jewish experience today, the analogy is intended. Judaism has an orthodox community; a middle-of-the-road, conservative community; and a reformed, liberal (even humanistic) community—each maintaining the Jewish faith and traditions. But Judaism has no pope to excommunicate the "dissident heretics." Can Catholicism survive with orthodox, conservative, and liberal communities united under one pope? A majority of American Catholics clearly disagree with many of the pope's definitions of sexual, marital, and reproductive morality, but their respect for and loyalty toward him as their spiritual leader remains intact. Many Catholics are determined to remain Catholics and live up to the challenge of their faith to explore the mysteries of human love and sexuality. They hear the warnings of their pope, but as adults they respond to their consciences and accept their responsibilities. As Catholics, they continue a religious form of civil disobedience, questioning and even rejecting some of what the pope sees as essential, informally infallible doctrines. Countless surveys suggest the dissent from the Vatican teachings on sexual morality ranges between 50 and 90 percent, depending on the issue in question.

Will the pope be tolerant of liberal-minded Catholics? I seriously doubt that anyone, especially key figures, who disagree with the pope on sexual morality will be excommunicated. They may, like Curran, lose their jobs, but they won't be read out of the Catholic church; the consequences of such a mass excommunication for church finances could be devastating. For the foreseeable future, the pope will continue stating his dogmatic positions while concerned Catholics continue to meet their challenge as responsible adults. Ten or twenty years from now, this whole debate may seem juvenile. Today, however, it is filled with real anguish and pain; Catholics are looking for answers in a world that offers no easy answers.

Notes

1. Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 88–91.
2. See Lawrence Kohlberg and Carole Gilligan, "Moral Reasoning and Value Formation," in *Sexuality and Human Values*, edited by M. Calderone (New York: Association Press, 1974).
3. See W. R. Slayton, "Religion and Adolescent Sexuality," in *Seminars in Adolescent Medicine*, 1:131-137. •

FREE INQUIRY Conferences on Audio and Video Tape NOW AVAILABLE!

"Ethics in Conflict: Biblical vs. Secular Morality"
University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia
October 31 and November 1, 1986
Complete set $39.00 (audio tape)
$89.00 (video tape)

"Jesus in History and Myth"
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Campus
April 19 and 20, 1985
Complete set $39.00

"Secular Humanism and Roman Catholicism: Confronting the Contemporary World"
American University, Washington, D.C.
September 11-13, 1987
Complete Set: $49.00

"Armageddon and Biblical Apocalyptic: Are We Living in the Last Days?"
University of Southern California, Los Angeles Campus
February 27, 1984
Complete set $19.00

"Religion in American Politics"
National Press Club, Washington, D.C.
March 16, 1983
Complete set $26.50

FREE INQUIRY Conference Tapes Order Form*

Please send me the following: ☐ **Biblical Versus Secular Morality** ☐ **Audio tape $39.00** ☐ **Video tape $89.00**
Audio only: ☐ **Religion & Politics, $26.50** ☐ **Biblical Apocalyptic, $19.00** ☐ **Jesus in History and Myth, $39.00**
☐ **Secular Humanism & Roman Catholicism, $49.00**

*Please add $3.50 for postage and handling.

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard # _____ Exp. _____ ☐ Check enclosed Total $ _____

NAME _____
(print clearly)

STREET _____ TELEPHONE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

FREE INQUIRY • Box 5 • Buffalo, NY 14215-0005 • Tele.: 716-834-2921 12/87

Belief and Unbelief Around the World

From Religious Belief to Secularism in Canada

Don Page

The state of religious belief in a country reflects its history and culture. In this respect, Canada differs significantly from its neighbor to the south, in spite of superficial similarities—a fact that Canadians know very well but often find difficult to explain.

The religious attitudes of Canadians, like our political attitudes, are actually more European than American.[1] The reason can be traced to three key factors involved in the founding of the Canadian state: (1) it was a traditional society in which the citizen's duty to the social organism took precedence over individual rights, (2) there was no specific requirement for separation of church and state, and (3) it was based on a multicultural principle of linguistic and cultural diversity. The social and political accommodations resulting from these factors have, today, brought about a profound secularism in Canada that may be the envy of humanists elsewhere.[2]

Historical Background

Canada's first large-scale English-speaking settlement came from the newly proclaimed United States, when waves of British loyalists fled northward after the American Revolution. These people were staunchly Tory in politics and Anglican in religion. They were also accompanied by a small number of Germans, who were an important part of the British army in the colonies—Lutheran people fighting for a Protestant German who happened to be King of England. As a self-selected group, these pioneers of English Canada were the most tradition-minded people of the thirteen American colonies—not a puritan or nonconformist among them. It has been these religiously and politically conservative people and their descendants who have set the cultural agenda for English Canada up to the present day.

When they came north two centuries ago, most of these "United Empire Loyalists," as they came to be called, settled on land in what is now the Province of Ontario to the west and in the Atlantic provinces to the east—the broad region of Quebec, in between, was occupied by a rapidly expanding French population, most of whom had already been on their land for three or four generations. Britain's conquest of French Quebec only a decade before the Boston Tea Party had saved the northern half of the continent for the British Crown by doing two things. First, it isolated the Quebecois from the democratic and secular ideas of the revolution in France. Second, it formally guaranteed them the right to continue to live and work in the French language and to practice their Catholic religion. Given the pervasive role of the Catholic church in Quebec affairs, Britain virtually established it as Quebec's official church. As a result Quebec stayed loyal to the Crown and hostile to the revolutionary Protestant colonies to the south. In the years following the American Revolution, the Quebecois, or at least the church that governed them, feared the new secular order of the United States as much as the newly arrived Anglo Loyalists did.

Thus developed a marriage of convenience. Two very different conservative societies in Canada—one Protestant and English-speaking, the other Catholic and French-speaking—formed an alliance against American values that has been at the heart of Canada's development every since.

The religious mix in English Canada was complicated in the nineteenth century by the large influence of Catholic-Irish immigrants, who were used as a source of cheap labor, and later by the Jews, Ukrainians, and other groups from central and eastern Europe. At the same time, a continual stream of working- and middle-class Britons poured into Canada, to be followed after World War II by waves of Italian-Catholic immigrants and, more recently, large numbers of highly educated non-Christian Indian and Third World peoples. Except for the Irish, most of these new immigrant groups have brought with them liberal religious and social attitudes, which have gradually moderated the original Toryism of Ontario and the Maritimes but have not displaced it. Many of these later immigrants settled in the provinces to the west of Ontario.

The Tory values of Ontario and the eastern Atlantic provinces are being increasingly challenged, not only from within, but also by the less rigid social attitudes found in the western provinces and northern territories. But it is interesting to note that in these western and northern regions, where socialist governments are frequently elected, the values and social attitudes that have taken hold are more akin to modern Europe's than the United States'. As we shall see later, the incidence of declared religious unbelief in these regions is higher than anywhere else in Canada, reaching an astounding 20 percent in British Columbia. Only in the province of Alberta, with its cattle and oil economy, are there noticeable links to American social values in the form of right-wing, Bible-belt religion and politics. But even here, in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, the more open attitudes of the rest of western Canada are becoming evident. In a recent 1986 provincial election, for

Don Page is the editor of International Humanist, *the journal of the International Humanist & Ethical Union.*

THE ASSURANCE OF FREE CHOICE

A New Basic Pamphlet (No. 27)

By Corliss Lamont

A brief summary of the main reasons for believing that all human beings possess true freedom of choice at the moment of deciding between different courses of action. Free choice, the most fundamental of all freedoms, is always conditioned and limited, but it is able to utilize mechanical devices and to interact with the general environment for the promotion of human welfare and progress. Your car operates according to determinism, but *you* decide where it goes.

A firm belief in free choice increases one's sense of personal and moral responsibility and strengthens human character. The issue of free choice and determinism goes back to the time of the ancient Greeks. Now modern science and philosophy enable us to give a more certain answer that makes room for free-wheeling men and women.

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

Send 50¢ in coin or check to

BASIC PAMPHLETS, BOX 42, New York, NY 10025

Special prices:

10 copies $3.50—20 copies $6.50—50 or more copies—40% Discount

Enclosed is my check for $ _____

Please send _____ copy (copies) of Basic Pamphlet No. 27.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

election, for example, socialist candidates in these cities were successful for the first time in replacing traditional right-wing Tories.

At the far eastern end of the country, the sparcely populated province of Newfoundland has its own distinctive history. A British colony until it voted to federate with Canada in 1948, Newfoundland contains the oldest English-speaking settlements in Canada—largely fishing folk from the ports of Ireland, Scotland, and England. Its religious culture is a mix of Catholic, Anglican, and nonconformist Protestant. Like the rest of Canada, it has no tradition of separation between religion and state.

The lack of any such formal separation in its constitution makes Canada more similar to Britain and other European countries than to the United States. Until six years ago Canadians lived without a written constitution, a situation changed only when then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau cajoled the country into writing its own constitution, which was finally proclaimed in 1981. This new constitution opens with a reference to God, put in at the last minute without public discussion—a fact that infuriates unbelievers. A similar reference to God has been inserted recently by Parliament into the national anthem, apparently with no objection from a single parliamentarian! But, as we shall see, evidence suggests that these actions by the politicians may be the last gasps of a piety that is rapidly disappearing.

Two Societies

There are two distinct societies in the Canadian state, each with very different religious histories: the relatively homogenous, French-speaking, Catholic society in the province of Quebec; and a more diverse, pluralistic English-speaking society in the rest of the country. In the past twenty-five years, these two societies have each become as open and secular as any now on the world scene. Each society, however, has moved toward secularism for widely different reasons and in their own particular ways. To correctly understand them we must deal with the French and English separately.

But first let me put forward a couple of important generalizations. In cultures where a single religion has been dominant—such as in Spain, Greece, and Quebec—the success of the development of secularism, once triggered, is directly related to the way the dominant church has exercised its social and political power. Moreover, in a pluralistic society, where no one religion is dominant—such as English-speaking Canada—not having a constitutional wall between church and state can actually encourage the development of tolerant, secular, and nontheistic social attitudes. A quick comparison between Canada and the United States suggests this might be so. Consider, for example, the general lack of virulent forms of Christianity in Canadian society and the relative failure of the television evangelists to establish video empires despite their massive efforts to do so. On the evidence available, theologians wishing to ensure the survival of religion in Canada might conclude that they should press for the adoption of the American constitutional model, which expressly prohibits the establishment of any religion.

French-Speaking Canada

For nearly two hundred years, Quebec society slumbered under the tutelage of its own particularly conservative brand of Roman Catholicism. Its political leadership always worked hand and hand with the church. This leadership had a great deal in common with the Christian Conservative political parties that still play so large a role in Italy and Germany, although at times it expressed some of the more unsavory aspects of the recently deposed dictatorships of Spain and Portugal. Under this regime, Quebec largely cut itself off from indigenous industrial and economic development, allowing free reign to English Canadian and foreign capital to exploit its resources and provide employment for its people.

Until about twenty-five years ago, Protestant, English-speaking Canadians tended to scorn French Quebec as a priest-ridden society —which it was. The church was the center of family life, and the parish priest was the most important person in the community. Many families had eight or more children, at least one of whom would enter a religious order. Schools, colleges, and hospitals were owned and run by the Catholic church. Black-robed priests and nuns were everywhere.

The secular movement in Quebec emerged after World War II, when the union movement strengthened. The church-backed provincial government of Maurice Duplessis used its police power ruthlessly to break up peaceful picket lines of ordinary Quebec people demanding their right to join a union. Duplessis was joined by church-supported politicians, the police, and multinational corporations run by anglophone managers. Such an alliance could not help but provoke support for the new union movement from Quebec's intellectuals. One strike in particular, in the asbestos industry, gained country-wide attention when newspaper photos showed Quebec's writers, artists,

and scholars marching arm in arm with the strikers as police charged at them with clubs.

The people of Quebec looked at themselves during this turbulent period of the 1950s, and they seemed collectively to decide to enter the modern world. When Duplessis died in 1959, Quebec society began its "quiet revolution," led by the newly radicalized intellectuals; and, together with the labor movement, they have gone on to develop a new social order. Some, like Pierre Trudeau, who marched in the asbestos strike, have carried the vitality of the new Quebec to the national level.

Many radicalized intellectuals were within, and remained part of, the Catholic church, which has transformed itself into one of the most liberal sections of the Catholic church worldwide. Nevertheless, it has been the big loser in Quebec's revolution. Seminaries, convents, and monasteries have closed down all over the province. The church is rarely, if ever, referred to in public discussion. And even the school system is in the last stages of being secularized. No longer is family life centered in the church. Quebec's birth rate is lower than any other province's—well below maintenance level—proof that papal dictums are being ignored on a massive scale. And community abortion clinics operate quietly without being picketed by the noisy "pro-lifers" one finds in the streets in front of similar establishments in English Canada.

Let me summarize this discussion of French Canada with a personal story that illustrates very well what has happened in Quebec. Monique, who is now aged about fifty, entered a convent near Quebec City when she was sixteen, and for sixteen years she was a teaching nun. In 1970 she quietly left the convent, like thousands of other nuns all over Quebec, and continued her career as a secular school teacher. In 1972 she met a colleague of mine, and they soon decided to live together unmarried. They have been together ever since, finally marrying last year in a nontheistic ceremony. Two of Monique's brothers also belonged to religious orders, but they too have abandoned them for the secular world.

English-Speaking Canada

The majority of English-speaking Canadians are nominally Protestant, but they are divided among a variety of denominations; Roman Catholics can thus claim to be the single largest religious group. Since the turn of the century, however, an ecumenical movement among Protestants has brought together the majority of Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists into what is known as the United Church, which has now replaced Anglicans as the largest Protestant group. (Traditional rumps of the original denominations still exist, and they contain many of our Christian fundamentalists.) The United Church is specifically liberal in its theology and practice, eschewing biblical literalism and preaching the responsibility of its members to participate in progressive social change. Many of its ministers, in fact, are women, and five years ago a woman, Lois Wilson, became its national moderator and then went on to become president of the World Council of Churches.

More than 80 percent of the professed Christians in Canada are therefore members of the Catholic, United, or Anglican churches, all of which are nonfundamentalist in theology and preach liberal public positions on most social issues, including advocating full employment and socialized medical care and education. These major churches also favor the Canadian withdrawal from military alliances and disassociation from American foreign policy in such areas as Central America.

The major breach in this liberal phalanx is, unsurprisingly, Catholic dogma on homosexuality, abortion, birth control, and divorce. Although most Catholics ignore their church's positions in these areas, more traditional Catholics have formed an alliance with fundamentalist Protestants to meld a politically significant minority that inhibits progressive public policy on sexual and reproductive issues. Canadian law, for example, currently requires a woman to seek and obtain approval from a special hospital committee before she can receive a therapeutic abortion.

The Data on Unbelief

Why have the major churches become more "socially conscious"? They had no choice—they had to respond to declining church attendance and recognize that the vast majority of both French- and English-speaking Canadians are no longer moved by traditional, other-worldly calls to piety. According to figures from the 1981 census, the fastest growing group is the 1.8 million non-believing Canadians; they numbered 930,000 in 1971 and only 60,000 in 1961.

The census figures also show that the Pentecostals are the only significant religious group to have recently increased in size—now numbering, however, merely 340,000, not compar-

Help Further the Cause of Humanism.

Please remember FREE INQUIRY in your will.

Won't you consider making a provision in your will for FREE INQUIRY and the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism? This will ensure vital support for the defense and development of humanism.

Although humanists do not believe in immortality, they know that the good work they do will survive them. By leaving a percentage of your estate to FREE INQUIRY (CODESH, INC.), you will be furthering the ideals of humanism.

We would be happy to work with you and your attorney in the development of a will or estate plan that meets your wishes.

Besides a will, there are many other possibilities, such as living trusts and charitable gift annuities from which you receive an annual income from the transfer of property now. Or you might make a contingent bequest, by which FREE INQUIRY (CODESH, INC.) will receive a gift only if your primary beneficiaries do not survive you.

For more information, contact Paul Kurtz, Editor of FREE INQUIRY.

P.O. Box 5
Buffalo, New York 14215 • 716-834-2921
All inquiries will be held in the strictest confidence.

able with the figures for unbelievers. This increase in Pentecostals (and other smaller fundamentalist denominations) is known to consist of traditionally pious people who were dissatisfied with the changes that have been occurring in the major churches. The president of the Humanist Association of Canada, Paul Pfalzner, has analyzed the census figures (see *Humanist in Canada,* Spring 1986) and finds that all other religious groups having more than 90,000 members today have either stagnated as a proportion of the population (the Baptists, Jews, Mennonites, Roman Catholics, and the Salvation Army) or decreased in total numbers (the Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Uniteds).

The census figure of 1.8 million unbelievers represents 7.4 percent of the total Canadian population and the fourth largest "confessional" group (after Catholics, Uniteds, and Anglicans). This relatively high figure was obtained in spite of the fact that the census-takers asked respondents to report that they belonged to a specific denomination even if they were not active members. By examining other sources, such as the *Yearbook of Canadian Churches,* Pfalzner has determined that in 1981 at least 7.8 million Canadians were not identified with any church or denomination. And he suggests that even this figure is far too low, since all Catholics, for example, are counted by their church as members as long as they appear on baptismal records. He concludes that, in view of the misleading church figures, and recognizing that many people who no longer practice religion are reluctant to admit it, it is likely that close to 50 percent of the Canadian population are in fact without religious affiliation, thus actually constituting the largest single "confessional" group in the country.

A close look at the census figures reveals other interesting facts. The percentage of nonbelievers becomes higher as one travels west across the country. In British Columbia, where 20 percent describe themselves as nonbelievers, they form the largest group (they are the second largest in the Yukon and Quebec). Another fact: The number of female nonbelievers is growing faster than the number of males, having increased by 104 percent between 1971 and 1981, while the number of male unbelievers increased 84 percent over the same period.

Conclusions

The spectacular rise of secularism in Catholic French Canada has occurred in the period of one generation, the apparent result of a widespread perception that the church, as a key part of the former ruling power structure, had been instrumental in blocking social progress. This rejection by a homogeneous society of its religious oligarchy parallels similar revolutions in other homogeneous societies.

By comparison, English Canada is a multicultural society; the political and religious leadership have no choice but to take seriously the need for pluralism and tolerance. Most politicians, and even some churches, now appear to believe that piety is essentially incompatible with the tolerance considered necessary for social harmony and progress. The major churches have begun turning to a this-worldly orientation as a result, but they have not been successful thus far in stemming the continuous loss of their memberships.

A political minority formed by an alliance among traditional Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants represents the main impediment from the religious front to further progress toward a more open society. Because elected politicians are reluctant to confront this alliance, Canada's next moves toward securing the rights of self-determination will likely have to come through the courts.

The humanist movement here has unlimited opportunities for growth, but it must address the needs of the unchurched families and individuals who find themselves forced to rely on religious ministers to perform rites-of-passage ceremonies and provide life-crisis counseling. It is likely that the churches will "humanize" themselves sufficiently to ensure their survival as support organizations for many people, but secular humanist organizations offering similar support without the religious trappings would surely be a healthy development.

Notes

1. In briefly sketching this story I will not deal with Canada's original inhabitants, whose religions have been almost completely replaced by those of the European settlers.

2. See Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Richmond Hill, Ontario: Irwin Publishing, 1987). Bibby's book, published after this article was written, supports in detail my hypothesis and contains as comprehensive a study of religion in a modern society as can be found anywhere. •

Good-looking sturdy holders to protect your copies of FREE INQUIRY.

Holders are available in either red, yellow, blue, green or black vinyl with gold ornamentation and convenient slots for labels on the front and the back.

Each container holds 20 issues (5 years) of FREE INQUIRY.

$6.95 each, plus $1.50 for postage and handling

Please send me _____ *holders in red* ____
yellow ____ *blue* ____ *green* ____ *black* ____

Total $ _____

☐ *Enclosed is my check or money order*

Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. _____

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005

Books One Step Ahead

Nicholas Capaldi

Out of Step, by Sidney Hook (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), xiii + 628 pp., $29.95.

Sidney Hook—professor, philosopher, writer—has been a central figure in many of this century's most passionate intellectual and political debates. His memoirs have been eagerly awaited. No doubt, some might have expected them to follow the example of others in the genre, to be a last rationalization of positions espoused, an attempt on Hook's part to display his steadfast and precocious perception of the truth, an opportunity to settle old scores. But Sidney Hook, in *Out of Step,* has risen above all these temptations and produced a document that traces the history of this country's often clashing social ideals, describes the personalities who argued them, and tries to draw some moral lessons from his own mistakes as well as the mistakes of others. Historians of ideas will find this book to be a treasure in their attempts to understand not just what positions were held but why and how.

The theme that will perhaps arouse the most interest is Hook's relation to communism. As a result of his reading and interpretation of Marx, Hook believed that social problems could be understood and solved in terms of a socialist economic theory and a democratic political theory. Socialism appealed to him because it was (a) rational and systematic, (b) compassionate, and (c) because there was not yet any historical awareness of how the power of a socialist state could be oppressive. In his early days he conceptualized the problem as one of capitalism versus socialism. Curiously, capitalism at the time had no serious and articulate defender. Those who adhered to the status quo seemed unwilling to reinterpret old traditions in the light of new human ideals. At the same time, Hook concedes that, while he judged capitalism by its practice, he judged socialism by its aspirations. With many others in the aftermath of World War I, Hook assumed that capitalism had to expand in order to survive and that this expansion inevitably led to war. In contrast, he believed that communism was the logical consequence of noble liberal ideals.

Nicholas Capaldi is professor of philosophy at Queens College.

Two historical events added further luster to communism. Hook was inspired by the success of the Russian Revolution. The Soviet Union could now present itself as the first nation to truly put a socialist program into action, to embody an ideal and not just to espouse it. The second event was the advent of the Great Depression, during which many lost what little faith they had in capitalism. All of this culminated for Hook in his endorsement of the Communist Party ticket in the 1932 presidential election, an endorsement that Hook now describes as an "expression of protest, hope, and faith nurtured by naiveté, ignorance, and illusion."

Hook's disenchantment with communism, and particularly with the Soviet Union, came about gradually. Hook relates how in March of 1933 he was asked by Earl Browder, of the American Communist Party, to set up an espionage apparatus among academic scientists for the benefit of the Soviet Union. Hook was appalled. This incident was followed in 1936 and 1937 by the Moscow Trials, in which old-line bolsheviks were charged and convicted of unlikely crimes, including treason. What seemed incredible was that in the absence of serious evidence the accused confessed their guilt; all of them, that is, except Trotsky, who was living in exile and who vehemently denied the charges and ridiculed the Kremlin's case. Hook formed an independent committee to examine the matter. To this committee, the trials revealed the extent to which the Soviet Union had not only failed to embody the socialist ideal but had also become an evil and oppressive totalitarian society. From an intellectual point of view, Hook came to realize that *any* purely economic analysis of social problems (whether Marxist or capitalist) was woefully inadequate, that "any conception of socialism that rejected the centrality of moral values was only an ideological disguise for totalitarianism." Henceforth it would become important to distinguish carefully between socialism and communism and to reevaluate the meaning of socialism.

The Moscow Trials also revealed to Hook how irrational and irresponsible was the emotional attachment of many American intellectuals to communism and the Soviet Union. In recalling his own earlier blindness during his 1929 trip to Moscow, Hook points out that he went with the faith of someone already committed. It was but a short step to rationalizing Soviet abuses by saying that the mistakes were temporary, something like growing pains. Yet behind this rationalization was a profound fear of losing the only ideal available to those who had rejected capitalism. If communism failed in the Soviet Union, then the critics of capitalism could be considered mere utopians. Hook documents how Malcolm Cowley, editor of the *New Republic,* Walter Duranty, Moscow correspondent for the *New York Times,* Lillian Hellman, and many others persistently defended the Kremlin's line in the Moscow Trials despite the Kremlin's transparently fabricated case and the increasing flow of information about repression in the Soviet Union.

In speculating about this irrational attachment to the politics of communism and to the Soviet Union, Hook describes how communism also dominated American *cultural* life, especially in the arts, the movies, and literature. It became very common among the intellectual class to associate everything avant-garde with communism. The Zeitgeist led many to sudden conversions, often triggered by a new wife or a new girlfriend, or, as in the case of older persons, by the involvement of a favorite child or a "sense of final professional frustration." In addition, to Jewish intellectuals there was the special appeal of the "universalist socialist dream of a secular classless society"; one could now be among the "chosen people not of God but of history." Indeed, communism in the 1930s offered more than just intellectual commitment; it provided a "network of social, emotional, and personal relationships that constituted a vibrant community."

In spite of the Soviet Union's failures, many continued to give that nation their loyalty—after all, they argued, the Kremlin was the only bastion of defense against Hitler's fascism. But this illusion was shattered by the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939 and the subsequent Soviet invasions of Poland and Finland. Hook notes that, even here, many intellectuals (like Upton Sinclair) still defended the pact.

Curiously, when the final disenchantment with communism and the Soviet Union came, disaffected American and European intellectuals abandoned their gods but not the manner in which they worshipped. Unable and now unwilling to defend the Soviet Union, many critical intellectuals adopted the position during the Cold War that any difference between the Soviets and the

United States was purely superficial. It thus became necessary to play down any Soviet act of oppression and to magnify grotesquely the negative consequences of any American policy or act. Indeed, for some intellectuals, even to admit that there were serious differences of degree between the two nations, and that such differences of degree were tantamount to differences in kind, would require the further admission that on some scale the United States was actually *virtuous*—an admission impossible for radical American intellectuals to make. It was one thing to admit errors based on a lack of information, quite another to jettison the whole conceptual apparatus of economic determinism, which many radical intellectuals had dogmatically employed to make sense of the social and political world.

The consequences of this attitude have not been surprising. Unilateral nuclear disarmament is advocated by people like Christopher Lasch, one of those intellectuals who sees no essential difference between the Soviet Union and the United States. The defense and survival of the West is not deemed worth the risk of nuclear war; peace gained through the present balance of terror is discounted. Pacifists fear that in war, even against a fascist regime, fascism would take over America and suppress all dissent. Even during World War II, intellectuals like Dwight McDonald and Paul Goodman criticized our war against Hitler from this basis.

This obsession with potential fascist repression in the United States led many to deny that Soviet agents had infiltrated our government during the 1940s and 1950s. This explains, according to Hook, why the Whittaker Chambers-Alger Hiss affair in 1948 is still such a rallying point for them. But to defend Hiss now, writes Hook, is pure historical hallucination. Evidence is overwhelming that he was a spy. Hook's views on other controversial cases are equally pointed. "There was no question among those of us familiar with the evidence that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were guilty of espionage." And on the famous "Sacco and Vanzetti" affair: "Carlo Tresca, the Italian-American Anarchist leader, who ought to know, told me that Sacco was guilty. It was indisputable, however, that neither he nor Vanzetti ever got a fair trial."

Although Hook did not write *Out of Step* to defend any sweeping thesis about recent intellectual history, a remarkably coherent pattern nevertheless begins to emerge. Guided by an all-encompassing world-view that explains all evil in economic deterministic terms, radical American intellectuals have consistently opposed any interpretation of historical events or current controversy that does not reflect badly on a *capitalist* United States. The evidence and the events cited by Hook become a massive indictment of the irresponsibility of many such intellectuals. Perhaps the best instances are those close to home, namely in the field of higher education. Radical intellectuals picture the investigation of the communist role in academe in the 1940s and 1950s as a "witch hunt." Consequently, these very same intellectuals play down the actual presence of communists in the faculty during that period, and they further ignore the extent to which some fellow radicals on our present faculties use political litmus tests when hiring, give their students biased reading lists, encourage unscholarly assignments, and turn their classrooms into propaganda mills. The whole notion of an ethics of scholarship, outlined by Sidney Hook in his book *Heresy—yes; Conspiracy—no,* is either ignored or denied.

Perhaps the theme that impressed me the most—one to which Hook keeps returning, but without fanfare—is the moral responsibility attached to being an intellectual. An intellectual should do more than merely articulate views; he or she should also offer a vision of the values that animate those views. Not losing sight of those values will enable us to see just when the rationalizations are turning our views in the opposite direction. Hook's sense of moral responsibility can be seen in his critique of a present-day radicalism that now rejects majority rule and is no longer committed to tolerance in debate. The theme is reflected in Hook's censure of the administration of New York University for its unprincipled capitulation to the student protests in the late 1960s. It is reflected in his critique of publications like the *New York Times,* where "no anticommunist educator ever received a fair shake in the education stories . . . while Benjamin Fine was the editor." And it is reflected in his attack on Irving Howe, who discusses the Holocaust as the worst of all evils but "evades the question of [his] own moral irresponsibility in opposing any involvement in the war against Fascism." Not only do ideas have consequences, but so does the manner of holding and pursuing them. In the end it is not a question of being right or prescient but of the willingness to admit and to learn from past mistakes.

A review of *Out of Step* would be unbalanced if it did not call attention to the moving and sometimes hilarious picture Hook draws of his childhood. Raised in a poor family in Brooklyn, Hook writes that he was a happy and hopeful boy, who knew that education could open doors of opportunity for him. His descriptions of growing up, of attending City College and Columbia, and of his early years of teaching at N.Y.U. make a time and place many of us missed come alive.

I should note, however, that Hook's autobiography is much more political than personal. In the end, he reaffirms his positions as an "unreconstructed believer in the welfare state and in a steeply progressive income tax, a secular humanist, and a firm supporter of freedom of choice with respect to abortion [and] voluntary euthanasia."

Out of Step captures the intellectual spirit of our century. It also captures the mind and soul of a great man who wasn't so much out of step as he was one step ahead. •

Give a subscription to FREE INQUIRY to relatives, friends, and your library.

Please enter a one-year gift subscription at $20.00 for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Additional gifts of FREE INQUIRY can be purchased at a 30% discount on the regular subscription price. (Please use a separate sheet.)

My name: _____

Address: _____

Total $ _____ ☐ Check or money order enclosed

Charge my ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard _____ Exp. _____

☐ Please send a gift card in my name.

Return to: FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005 716-834-2921

Viewpoints

Elections, Base Hits, and Tornadoes

Frank Reuter

In November 1986 the citizens of Arkansas voted on a constitutional-amendment initiative that would have prohibited the use of state funds for abortion. The day after the election, when substantial yet incomplete returns pointed to the amendment's probable passage, Kevin McCray, coordinator of the Unborn Child Amendment Committee, told the Associated Press, "We are grateful to the Lord for this victory."

But McCray's comments were made too hastily. Final tabulations sent the amendment down to defeat by roughly 600 votes out of over 636,000 cast. Needless to say, the reversal made the comment about gratitude to the Lord seem a bit silly. After all, McCray certainly did not mean: "We are grateful to the Lord for the final outcome, whatever it may be."

This essay, incidentally, is not about abortion. It is about perceptions of divine intervention. My motivation for writing this was several weeks old by the time of the elections; it stemmed from the 1986 World Series between the Boston Red Sox and the New York Mets, when Ray Knight (then a Mets player) announced that he had prayed when the Mets were one out away from losing the Series.

In game six, with Boston ahead three games to two, the Red Sox scored two runs in the top of the tenth inning to take what seemed to be an insurmountable lead. In the bottom of the tenth, the first two Mets batters flew out, leaving the Red Sox, surely baseball's most tragic team, one out away from a World Series Victory. But Gary Carter singled. Two more singles, a wild pitch, and an error produced three runs, and the Mets forced a seventh game.

Ray Knight, who scored the game's winning run, was interviewed in a state of utter ecstasy. He was asked whether he thought it was all over when the second out was made. No, Knight said, the Mets had come from behind many times. But he looked toward heaven nonetheless. And right after he offered a prayer to "the good Lord," Gary Carter singled.

(Ray Knight, incidentally, hit the go-ahead home run in game seven and was named MVP of the Series, making an essay based on criticism of his spiritual claims very shaky indeed, especially for a Boston fan, who is taught from birth about the supernatural curse of his home team.)

Athletes in this country often ascribe victory to the "good Lord." One hopes its prevalence in politics is in retreat. In the present mood of the country, such statements are just taken for granted. One tends not to ask philosophical questions afterward.

Just a few years ago here in Arkansas, a similar assertion caused quite a stir. U.S. Reed of the Arkansas Razorbacks—basketball variety—hit a shot from beyond half-court at the final buzzer to turn a one-point defeat into a one-point victory and knock Louisville from the NCAA tournament. In a post-game interview, the player very directly attributed the success of his shot to God. His claim did not go unchallenged; in the state's major newspapers, many people criticized the player's comment. How foolish, they wrote, to assume that God favors one athletic team over another, as though He sits in some divine grandstand and rigs the outcome to satisfy His own emotional needs!

But I think the critics miss a basic point. I share their emotional response; such comments seem silly, downright offensive. Having been brought up Catholic, I was given to believe that individuals need to do meritorious deeds to produce meritorious results. God would not stoop to put his reputation on the line to favor one team over another, not even when Liberty Baptist battles Notre Dame.

I think the mentality that underlies such assertions is usually misunderstood: The athlete does not mean that God caused the baseball to skip by the second baseman's glove, or the basketball to magnetically pierce the rim because he was rooting for one team over the other. These athletes must realize that the opposing teams are often loaded with players who pray just as hard as they do. Frankly, if the athletes were pressed, I think they would probably concede that God places almost no emphasis on final scores or other stats. What these athletes are doing when they make such claims is echoing habitual theological notions. They seem to be saying something like this: "No good can come to anyone unless the Lord allows it. He allows it because of faith, not skill or merit. I always have faith; thus, when anything good happens, it is not me but the Lord who is responsible."

To anyone who knows something about the history of religions, it should be obvious that this is a statement regarding "faith alone," the belief that one cannot do anything meritorious by oneself. Since the question is a moot one, I will drop for the moment any discussion about why shots with tremendous velocity and low trajectory enter a basket in spite of a low probability of doing so. Instead, I will analyze the mentality of those who make such statements.

The most important quality to notice about this mindset is that it is water-tight. In any argument or analysis, there are two types of evidence: positive and negative, the one confirming a hypothesis, the other contradicting it. But the kind of religious individuals we're talking about can never experience negative evidence, though they do of course often play for losing teams. When something bad happens—they blow a big game, their mothers succumb to cancer, or their coach is arrested for child-abuse—people of such conviction can argue that this negative evidence effectively demonstrates that the world, without God's grace, is evil and corrupt. But anything good that happens just as incontrovertibly proves that God rewards men of faith.

A person with this kind of religious conviction fails to see, of course, that a cause-effect relationship between God's will and good events is impossible to show. Ironically, this fact is most obvious when the evidence is heavily negative. Some years ago, for example, after a tornado struck Warren, Arkansas, killing several inhabitants and leveling dozens of homes, I was stunned to hear an interview in which a survivor contended that the tornado proved God's goodness. At the time, I was shocked and downright contemptuous of a person who could claim that, because *he* survived (when many of his neighbors presumably didn't), tornadoes manifest divine benevolence. But I have come to discover that such comments are

(Continued on p. 56)

Frank Reuter holds a Ph.D. in Old English literature and lives on a small farm in northwest Arkansas, where he operates a writing and editing service.

John Dewey: Educator and Innovator

Tim Madigan

Fundamentalists love to list the flaws of the modern-day public education system: the overcrowding, the inadequate facilities, the overworked teachers, and the poorly instructed and often combative students. They trace these flaws to the lack of religious instruction in the schools—as though this were the main cause of our children's low SAT scores. In their opinion, the blame for this state of affairs rests squarely on the shoulders of educational innovators, who have deviated from the practices of the good old days, when the dictum "Spare the rod and spoil the child" ruled.

The man whom fundamentalists consider to be most responsible for innovations in the public schools is the American philosopher John Dewey (1859–1953). The word *Deweyism* crops up often in their literature, with an opprobrium usually reserved for "Communism," and with much the same meaning (a rank insult to Dewey, the philosopher of democracy). It was Dewey, they hold, who led the fight to take God out of the schoolroom, substituting atheistic humanism to fill the void.

To be sure, Dewey was no advocate of religion in the public schools. He argued in "Democracy in the Schools" that even devoutly religious people should be wary of mixing religion with public education:

> If one inquires why the American tradition is so strong against any connection of State and Church, why it dreads even the rudiments of religious teaching in state-maintained schools, the immediate and superficial answer is not far to seek. . . . The cause lay largely in the diversity and vitality of the various denominations, each fairly sure that, with a fair field and no favor, it could make its own way; and each animated by a jealous fear that, if any connection of State and Church were permitted, some rival denomination would get an unfair advantage.

Dewey saw an even greater reason for keeping religious instruction out of the public schools. Religious instruction, at least as it was taught dogmatically, could never truly be in harmony with the scientific method, which he felt was education's most essential lesson and tool.

> Already the spirit of our schooling is permeated with the feeling that every subject, every topic, every fact, every professed truth must submit to a certain publicity and impartiality. All proffered samples of learning must go to the same assay-room and be subjected to common tests. It is the essence of all dogmatic faiths to hold that any such "show-down" is sacrilegious and perverse. The characteristic of religion, from their point of view, is that it is intellectually secret, not public; peculiarly revealed, not generally known; authoritatively declared, not communicated and tested in ordinary ways. . . . It is pertinent to point out that, as long as religion is conceived as it now by the great majority of professed religionists, there is something self-contradictory in speaking of education in religion in the same sense in which we speak of education in topics where the method of free inquiry has made its way. The "religious" would be the last to be willing that either the history or the content of religion should be taught in this spirit; while those to whom the scientific standpoint is not merely a technical device, but is the embodiment of the integrity of mind, must protest against its being taught in any other spirit.

Not much has changed since he wrote these words in 1908.

Dewey was a lifetime advocate of democracy. He held that if a democratic society, which seeks to protect the rights of its minority members, is to succeed, a spirit of tolerance must be fostered. Parochial prejudice, he saw, is harmful to such a spirit. The best means of overcoming such parochialism is through the interaction of people from many different creeds, nationalities, and cultures. And such interaction should begin as soon as possible, before individuals become hidebound slaves to their own traditions. The public-school system, therefore, is an ideal place for promoting social unity.

It is for this reason that Dewey advocated educating *all* the children in our society—not merely those who were wealthy or intellectually gifted. Every citizen of a democracy deserves at least the opportunity to have an adequate education; this opportunity is good for the citizen, and it is good for the society.

The philosopher Mortimer Adler—a renowned critic of education in his own right—was a student of Dewey's but became perhaps his severest critic. A devout Aristotelian, Adler scoffed at his professor's pragmatic, relatively freewheeling approach to education. But Adler has since reassessed his position. As he related on the television show "Firing Line" (of all places), he now applauds Dewey's work on educational reform: "John Dewey, for the first time in the whole history of education, put two words together: democracy and education." Adler, in fact, dedicated his book *The Paideia Proposal,* which calls for radical changes in the educational system, to his old nemesis.

While it is doubtful that Dewey would have concurred with Adler's back-to-basics-with-great-books proposal, he would surely have agreed that there *are* problems with the system—the very same problems that the fundamentalists so frequently list. Unlike the fundamentalists, however, he would not advocate a flight from the public schools to the kind of church-run private schools FREE INQUIRY exposed recently (FI, Fall 1987). The danger with church-schools is that the students don't mingle with children from other backgrounds; the social divisiveness this separation encourages is detrimental to the health of a democratic society. Worse, the students in such schools are told not to think for themselves; the very heart of the educational process is cut out.

The education of everyone in our society has been an unprecedented task—and a shining example of democracy at its best. Dewey devoted a great amount of work to this experiment. Like all experiments, it has its flaws; but, in the long run, it is an experiment worthy of our support. The church-school advocates, not wishing to be a part of the public-school experiment, have pulled their children out. Yet many of them expect financial support from the government—in the form of tuition tax-credits—for this move. Surely such support is self-defeating. Democracy and education go hand-in-hand, and to subvert the education of this country's children would cause great harm to the nation. John Dewey spent a good part of his long life pointing this out:

> In the broad and final sense all institutions are educational in the sense that they operate to form the attitudes, dispositions, abilities and disabilities that constitute a

Tim Madigan is assistant editor of FREE INQUIRY.

> concrete personality. . . . Whether this educative process is carried on in a predominantly democratic or non-democratic way becomes, therefore, a question of transcendent importance not only for education itself but for its final effect upon all the interests and activities of a society that is committed to the democratic way of life.

We should keep this in mind. The problems of mass education are staggering; but, instead of throwing up our hands and abandoning the project, as the church-schoolers have done, we should follow the example of John Dewey, the perpetual innovator, and look for solutions and new ways of providing quality education. A democratic society demands that we do no less. •

Our Transitional Species

Betty McCollister

A favorite creationist argument against evolution is the absence of transitional forms in the fossil record. Creationists claim, with characteristic inaccuracy, that the fossil record is the main source for evolutionary inferences, and that none of the transitional types that scientists have described are anything of the sort.

In fact, *Homo sapiens* is the most ubiquitous and widespread of all transitional species, or so it appears from the evolutionary viewpoint.

Even Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), a creationist, placed *Homo sapiens* with the other primates, while in 1854, five years before Darwin's great work appeared, the young Thomas Henry Huxley had already concluded that humans fit into the patterns that zoologists had discovered in animals. Writing of that time in *Man's Place in Nature* (titled before feminist sensibilities would be inflamed by it), he recalled:

> Among the many problems which came under my consideration, the position of the human species in zoological classification was one of the most serious . . . a burning question in the sense that those who touched it were almost certain to burn their fingers severely.

Attempts to fit humanity into the general scheme of things antedate Huxley, of course, going back to the beginnings of most religions. The first Genesis myth rates us pretty highly:

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Betty McCollister is a regular contributor to FREE INQUIRY.

After that, it's pretty much downhill in the Bible, the creationist science and history textbook. To the psalmist, man seemed "a little lower than the angels" but was crowned with glory and honor. To the unknown genius who gave us the sublime Book of Job,

> Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.

With the Christian part of the Bible, especially with Paul—morbid, obsessed, life-denying—we get original sin, total human depravity from the instant of conception, and a dismal attitude toward men and women that was seized on by the early church fathers, cemented into dogma by St. Augustine, and has poisoned Christian attitudes to this day.

Given this drastic assessment of human nature, how can fundamentalists fear that children who learn they descend from animals will behave like animals? It is curiously inconsistent to suggest either that creatures already hopelessly vile could be any worse or that objectionable social ills such as divorce, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, prostitution, and other aberrations that are uniquely human spring from a belief that our distant forbears were animals.

Huxley's more probable hypothesis, that our kind is transitional, was, he felt, amply supported by Darwin's *Origin of the Species.* He drew a striking parallel between "the life of man and the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the butterfly."

> History shows that the human mind, fed by constant accessions of knowledge, periodically grows too large for its theoretical coverings, and bursts them asunder to appear in new habiliments, as the feeding and growing grub, at intervals, casts its too narrow skin and assumes another. . . . Truly the imago state of Man seems to be terribly distant, but every moult is a step gained.

Recognizing already what modern biology abundantly confirms, that chimpanzees and gorillas are more closely related to us than to the other apes, Huxley nevertheless described man as a creature who stands "far above the level of his humble fellows, and transfigured from his grosser nature by reflecting, here and there, a ray from the infinite source of truth."

Konrad Lorenz has suggested that we *are* the missing link between apes and humans, while Richard Leakey, contemplating our extremely close biochemical affinities with chimps and gorillas, writes:

> . . . I would go so far as to suggest that, were it not for our ego and concern to be different, the African apes would be included in our family, the Hominidae.

It is inconceivable that a judicious observer from another solar system would see in our species—which has tended to be cruel, destructive, wasteful, and irrational—the crown and apex of cosmic evolution. Viewing us as the culmination of *anything* is grotesque; viewing us as a transitional species makes more sense—and gives us more hope. The lungfish and crossopterygians, who were able to survive the drying up of waters at the end of the Devonian period, gave rise to amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. And the archeopteryx somehow straddled land-life as a reptile and air-life as a bird. Similarly, our enlarged, convoluted brain, our upright posture, our opposable thumbs, and our power of speech have opened vistas to us that are as inconceivable to other creatures as land life is to marine animals.

In his fascinating book *The Tangled Wing,* Melvin Konner quotes a zoologist who has studied the archeopteryx intensively and found it "very much like people," explaining,

> Well, you see, it's such a transitional creature. It's a piss-poor reptile and not very much of a bird.

Exactly. As Lorenz proposes, we are piss-poor apes and not very much of human beings. But what incalculably splendid dimensions we might explore if we can preserve ourselves from extinction and evolve a capacity to better reflect rays from "the infinite source of truth." •

(**Elections,** *cont'd. from p. 53*)

neither rare nor unusual. In fact, they are as predictable as the spring storm season here in "tornado alley."

The person who finds a tornado to be a manifestation of providence has been conditioned to think that God's goodness is a totally unquestionable proposition. When he experiences tragedy, therefore, the fact that its scope is limited or that it ends becomes a proof of divine goodness. As always, all good confirms religious belief and strengthens the religious commitment, and all evil makes one aware of the need to increase faith. No negative evidence of any kind can possibly break through this impregnable wall.

This kind of religious conviction has created a trap in which any evidence cannot help but promote the religion itself. It is a profoundly powerful evolutionary mechanism that practically guarantees a religion's firm grip on its members.

We'll never know or hear which Red Sox players—or fans—said prayers that were not answered. (I suspect no one dared ask Calvin Schiraldi or Bill Buckner.) And, as for Mr. McCray, although he was disappointed that the abortion amendment initiative failed, his convictions offer him protection: He can simply claim that evil prevailed. •

(**Life-stance,** *cont'd. from p. 7*)

religion. Do they, taking all in all, respond negatively or positively? The ferocity of the antipathy on the one hand, and the power of the concern on the other, that is generated by this word quite obliterates reasoned discussion of many substantial and important questions concerning how we should develop humanism. Likewise, our discussions with the god-religious are confused and frustrated.

We need a new term for the idea and ideal of religion, opened out so that it is not discriminatory. Let this be *life-stance.* Could we perhaps bury the hatchet of *religion* and work together?

There is a job to be done. Humanists must establish humanism as a well-recognized source of moral authority in society, a support for the moral concerns of individuals. This does not involve a dogmatic claim that we are right. But it does involve a willingness and a capacity to argue effectively for our understanding of what an "ethical culture" is. •

(**Letters,** *cont'd. from p. 4*)

mental justice, supported by extensive expert testimony and the sterling track record of home-schooling.

Item: The record shows that home-schooled children score substantially higher than government-schooled children on any standard academic achievement test.

Item: The University of California at Berkeley finds that the average academic achievement of its undergraduates who were previously home-schooled is superior to the average academic achievement of its traditionally schooled undergraduates.

Item: Studies show that home-schooled children come out ahead even in the unlikely area of socialization.

Item: Dr. Raymond Moore, whose Hewitt Foundation has studied home-schooling for years, has found in ten thousand case-studies not one young person in trouble with the law.

Item: Dr. Donald Erickson, professor of education at the University of California at Los Angeles, and one of the world's leading authorities on teacher certification, points out in his defense of home-schooling that there is no scientific evidence of any kind that would indicate that teacher certification is of any value in improving the quality of learning.

Item: Most home-school parents are willing to submit to some form of accountability—such as annual standardized examination of students—that is not prohibitive or pervasively intrusive.

Item: Present laws can be employed to rectify any unproductive or inimical home-schooling situation.

Item: In ten years of observing and testifying before North Dakota legislative hearings, I have seen the admission of volumes of scholarly factual evidence supporting home-schooling and, in all that time, never even a single hard fact in opposition—only rhetoric.

Ms. Collins would be better employed in seeing to it that government schools be brought up to the level of achievement already attained by home schools. A free people thrive when there is opportunity for the exploration of alternatives.

Grael Brian Gannon
Shiloh Christian School

The Claim of Randomness

As a theoretical physicist who has co-authored a few papers on the inflationary universe, I was pleased to see Victor J. Stenger's article "Was the Universe Created?" (FI, Summer 1987). Stenger appears to believe that the idea that the universe resulted from a "random" quantum fluctuation will strike a blow against religious belief in a creator. Alas, the believer's response will instead most likely consist of the two traditional replies to biological evolution: denial ("It's only a theory") and assimilation ("It was God's tool"). The claim of randomness is no barrier to the latter. The word *random* implies that our universe would not have come into existence if conditions in the initial "spaceless, timeless void" had been just a little different (that is, if the quantum state of the universe had been a slightly different linear combination of possibilities). If this is indeed the case, the religious believer can claim that God picked out the specific state that did, in fact, result in our world, and for precisely that reason. If, on the other hand, the laws of physics turn out to permit only one initial state, and that state results in our world, the claim against a "grand design" is hardly robust.

The great battle between science and religion has been over biological evolution. This situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The true origin of the universe will not be nearly as repugnant to many religious believers as is the true origin of our species.

Mark Srednicki
Department of Physics
Univ. of Calif. at Santa Barbara

Grief and Solace

I have recently discovered that I have been a humanist all along. While reciting creeds, I used to tell myself that, though I didn't believe any of it, I liked the people and the friendships I had made in church.

But, at the same time, my rational mind was telling me that Christianity was a myth. Now, I think myths can be good teachers—but only if one does not take them (excuse the expression) as "gospel."

However, just now I am having a rough time. My beloved husband died unexpectedly more than a year ago—nearly two now. I'm finding it hard to get over my grief, and the one thought that seems to give some solace is that, maybe, when I die, I will see him again.

I am appealing to your readers to give me some direction to help me through this time in my life. Memories and gratitude for what we had are good, but they sure don't fill all the lonely hours.

Helen Williams
Los Angeles, Calif.

Falwell's Long List

I am now on Jerry Falwell's mailing list. I saw Jerry on "Nightline" bemoaning the Bakkers excesses, the pressure God is putting on him, and the need for financial accountability in televangelism. Since this was an auspicious moment, I called Falwell to request a financial statement.

For fifteen minutes I was batted around the offices of the Thomas Road Baptist Church like a badminton shuttlecock. Every woman I spoke to was a gracious southern belle until she learned what I wanted, after which I was treated with the disdain southerners usually reserve for New York liberals, investigative reporters, and dog-droppings on their newly sodded lawns.

I heard nothing for several weeks; and then, suddenly, a torrent began. No financial statement was delivered, of course, only message after computer-personalized message from my "friend" Jerry Falwell.

Falwell's mail runs the emotional gamut. Jerry is praying—for you, for me, for his church, for your church, for the president, for Judge Bork, for Jim and Tammy, for the right-to-lifers, for the aborted fetuses and zygotes, *ad infinitum, ad nauseam.* One wonders when Jerry has time to run his business, what with all the praying he has to do. It's a big responsibility.

Jerry also has several products to sell, the latest being his autobiography. Jerry was paid a $1 million advance for this tome of breathless prose. He wants to make more. He wants to sell it to me.

I was also invited to join the 15,000 Club. If I became a member, I would be entitled to receive a specially autographed edition of his book (presumably signed by him and not the computer that signs his letters), a special Bible, and study books. All that for only two hundred dollars (Visa and Mastercard accepted).

Jerry sent me another missive under the letterhead of the National Polling Center. This time, instead of wanting my prayers and money, he wanted my opinions and money. Jerry is afraid that the liberals—whom he identifies as the People for the American Way, the American Atheist Society, militant homosexuals, the National Organization for Women, the National Education Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, Planned Parenthood, and the Communist Party (in that order)—will elect a liberal president in 1988. Where does he expect this liberal candidate to come from, Mars? Certainly not from the disorganized bowels of the Democratic Party, whose front-runner changes weekly and who hasn't had a great candidate since Harry Truman.

The best piece I've received is the *Liberty Report,* a thirty-six page tabloid "newspaper" from the Liberty Federation, headed by, you guessed it, good old Jerry himself.

The first issue I received was almost equally divided into two parts: support for Robert Bork and strange ads one would expect to find in the *National Enquirer,* ads for "Secrets of Natural Healing for Super Perfect Health," various commemorative coins, fish oil capsules (share the secret of the Eskimo's good health), invisible hearing aids (does Peter Popoff read this stuff?), and a "nutrition" company that sold Ginseng, high-fiber tablets, cordless toothbrushes, and diet pills. The issue was topped off by two full-page ads—one for the "Stomach Stripper," an exercise device for flattening the stomach, and the other for the "Razor Shape Cyclone 600 Commando Knife" ("with the quick release sheath easily hidden in your boot or up your sleeve").

So, in the next few months, if you are approached by someone wearing a Bork button, and he looks very healthy and has a flat stomach, remember, he might have a knife up his sleeve.

David Alexander
Long Beach, Calif.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

Date of filing: September 30, 1987
Title: FREE INQUIRY
Frequency of issue: Quarterly
Complete mailing address of known office of publication: P.O. Box 5, 3159 Bailey Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215-0005
Complete mailing address of headquarters of publisher: P.O. Box 5, 3159 Bailey Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215-0005
Publisher: CODESH, Inc., 3159 Bailey Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215-0005
Owner: CODESH, Inc., 3159 Bailey Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215-0005
Editor: Paul Kurtz, 3159 Bailey Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215-0005
Managing Editor: Andrea Szalanski, 3159 Bailey Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215-0005
Known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders: None.

	Aver. no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Actual no. copies single issue published nearest filing date
A. Total no. copies printed (*Net Press Run*)	27,288	29,469*
B. Paid Circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	829	874
2. Mail Subscription	20,653	22,773
C. Total Paid circulation	21,482	23,647
D. Free distribution	2,483	2,985
E. Total distribution (*Sum of C & D*)	23,965	26,632
F. Copies not distributed		
1. Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	3,319	2,835
2. Returns from news agents	4	2
G. TOTAL (*Sum of E, F 1 and 2*)	27,288	29,469

*Note: as of December 15, the press run was 31,677, paid circulation was 24,649, and total distribution was 27,095.

FROM THE SUBSCRIBER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Difficulties with your subscription often can be avoided by simply knowing how a magazine works.

Here are answers to some questions you may have about your subscription to FREE INQUIRY.

Inquiries

When writing to us about your subscription, please attach the current mailing label. It helps us to identify your account and provide much faster service.

Address change

If you plan to change your address, please notify us six weeks before the change, due to our advanced addressing schedule.

Expiration Date

If you'd like to check on your expiration date, simply look at your mailing label. The date of the last issue of your subscription appears as the middle four digits of the top line (e.g., 8806 = June, 1988).

Missing or late issues

You will receive the first issue of your subscription within eight weeks of order receipt.

Duplicate copies

If you receive two copies of an issue, compare mailing labels. Any difference, however minor, could cause the problem. Please send us both labels and tell us which one is correct. We'll correct the situation at once; however, due to our addressing schedule, this problem may linger for one or two issues. If this happens, please pass the additional copies on to a friend with our compliments.

Duplicate bills/Renewals

Occasionally, we receive subscriber payments and renewal instructions after we have sent second notices. If this happens to you, simply disregard the second notice.

Invitation to subscribe

We often purchase the mailing lists of other magazines and organizations, and you may receive an invitation to subscribe to FREE INQUIRY if your name is on one of these lists. Please simply disregard this unavoidable duplication.

FREE INQUIRY
Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005
(716) 834-2921

IN THE NAME OF GOD

Reagan's Suspicion

President Reagan confided to West German Foreign Minister Hans-Deitrich Genscher in an unscheduled chat in the Oval Office that he really thinks Mikhail Gorbachev believes in God.

Secretary of State George Schultz also has a benign view of Gorbachev's religious tendencies. He tells friends that Gorbachev buried his Orthodox Christian mother in a Christian churchyard and never complained about her belief in religion, indicted by Karl Marx as "the opiate of the people." (Rowland Evans and Robert Novak)

Thou Shalt Bruise

Toronto—A minister who believes that spanking children is sanctioned by the Bible faces criminal charges for practicing what he preaches. . . .

Rev. Steven White, pastor of the Faith Baptist Church in Gloucester, Ontario . . . is calling on other independent fundamentalist churches to join him in fighting the charges on the grounds that religious freedom is at stake.

Mr. White, 31, has been charged under the Criminal Code with assaulting his eight-month-old son and with counseling assault.

The trouble started last year when he delivered a sermon entitled "How to Raise Rotten Kids." He used biblical references to support his belief that corporal punishment is ordered by the Bible, particularly in Proverbs:

"Foolishness is found in the heart of the child, but the rod of correction should drive it from him" [Proverbs 22:15]. . . .

It was not the first time Mr. White had spoken on spanking, but it was the first time someone in his congregation had tape-recorded the sermon.

A complaint was made and authorities went to the White home. Mr. White acknowledged he believed in spanking and said he had spanked his eight-month-old son the night before. The infant was taken to Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and examined.

A bruise was found on the baby's buttocks, and Mr. White agreed it was probably caused by the spanking.

Charges were lodged. . . .

"It's the Bible that is on trial here," Mr. White said. (Buffalo News)

Keeping Clean

Jehovah's Witnesses are being told for the first time that they should violate confidentiality requirements in medical, legal, and other professions when one of their members is discovered to have committed a serious sin.

"The objective would not be to spy on another's freedom but to help erring ones and to keep the Christian congregation clean," says the September 1 issue of the Watchtower *magazine, an authoritative publication of the Witnesses' Brooklyn-based Watchtower Society. . . .*

The magazine used a hypothetical case of "Mary," a medical assistant, discovering that a fellow Witness has had an abortion. "Did she have a scriptural responsibility to expose this information to elders in the congregation, even though it might lead to (Mary) losing her job, to her being sued, or to her employers having legal problems?" the article asked.

The answer was yes, and Witnesses were advised to determine, before pledging confidentiality in their jobs, "what problems this may produce because of any conflict with Bible requirements." (Los Angeles Times)

Helpful Hints from Oman

The Ministry of Health in the Sultanate of Oman has produced an illuminating set of instructions telling you all about AIDS. "Refrain from sins forbidden by God." Do not mix "with bad companions." And finally: "Do not approach lewdness," whether it be "manifest or concealed." (The Independent)

Leave It at the Beep

A man bedeviled by thousands of nasty calls because his telephone number ends in "666" says it has gotten so bad that he will not even let his wife play his phone-answering machine.

"I can't let my wife run the tape. It's thirty minutes of obscenities," Pat Kirkwood told the Dallas Times Herald.

He said he has received up to three thousand calls since Spring 1986 wrongly linking him to satanic cults simply because the last three digits of his phone number are a biblical symbol of the Antichrist.

"I've gotten calls saying I'm a satanic psychotic," said Kirkwood, a fifty-nine-year-old self-employed land appraiser. . . . "Hey, I'm an instrument-rated pilot and a deep-sea fisherman. I haven't got time for satanic worship," he said. . . .

A New Testament reference links the number 666 to "the beast," or the Antichrist. The thirteenth chapter in the Book of Revelation notes that "the beast" will be marked with the number.

Callers have threatened his family with sexual assault and death, he said. But he doesn't want to change the number because his home-based business might suffer and it would cost him $2,500 to tell customers of a new number. (AP)

Star-crossed

Port Allen, La.—Pat Norton, a candidate for Louisiana lieutenant governor, said Monday that a shooting star provided divine guidance for a decision that forced her out as the state's environmental chief. . . .

Norton was fired as secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality following a controversy over a night-time raid at Rollins Environmental Service plant near Baton Rouge.

She said she was called to the scene on August 5, 1985, by area residents complaining of smoke and fumes coming from the plant. Unsure of what to do, she said she "prayed to God for guidance."

"I looked back towards the plant. I saw the incinerator stack . . . a white plume of smoke was starting to come out of it," she said. "At that precise moment, a perfect, beautiful shooting star arched across the top of the incinerator. And I knew right at that moment what I had to do. And I knew it was the right thing."

Norton issued citations against the company, which led to a heated controversy resulting in her forced resignation from the DEQ post.

She said the experience was "a very sacred thing" and has been "defiled" by officials involved in the case, including Governor Edwin Edwards. (AP)

Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH)

The Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH) is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt educational organization dedicated to fostering the growth of the traditions of democracy, secular humanism, and the principles of free inquiry in contemporary society. In addition to publishing FREE INQUIRY magazine and the *Secular Humanist Bulletin*, CODESH sponsors the Academy of Humanism and the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion.

The Academy of Humanism

The Academy of Humanism was established to recognize distinguished humanists and disseminate humanistic ideals and beliefs. The members of the Academy, listed below, are nontheists who are (1) devoted to free inquiry in all fields of human endeavor, (2) committed to a scientific outlook and the use of the scientific method in acquiring knowledge, and (3) upholders of humanist ethical values and principles. The Academy's goals include furthering respect for human rights and freedom and the dignity of the individual, tolerance of various viewpoints and willingness to compromise, commitment to social justice, a universalistic perspective that transcends national, ethnic, religious, sexual, and racial barriers, and belief in a free and open pluralistic and democratic society.

Humanist Laureates: **Isaac Asimov,** author; **Sir Alfred J. Ayer,** Oxford; **Brand Blanshard,** professor emeritus of philosophy, Yale; **Sir Hermann Bondi,** professor of applied mathematics, Univ. of London; **Bonnie Bullough,** dean of nursing, SUNY at Buffalo; **Mario Bunge,** professor of philosophy of science, McGill Univ.; **Bernard Crick,** professor of politics, Univ. of London; **Francis Crick,** Nobel Laureate in Physiology, Salk Inst.; **Joseph Delgado,** chairperson of the Dept. of Neuropsychiatry, Univ. of Madrid; **Milovan Djilas,** author, former vice-president of Yugoslavia; **Jean Dommanget,** director, Royal Observatory of Belgium; **Sir Raymond Firth,** professor emeritus of anthropology, Univ. of London; **Joseph Fletcher,** theologian, professor emeritus of medical ethics, Univ. of Virginia Medical School; **Yves Galifret,** professor of physiology at the Sorbonne and director of l'Union Rationaliste; **John Galtung,** professor of sociology, Univ. of Oslo; **Stephen Jay Gould,** Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard; **Adolf Grünbaum,** professor of philosophy, Univ. of Pittsburgh; **Donald Johanson,** Inst. of Human Origins; **Franco Lombardi,** professor of philosophy, Univ. of Rome; **Jolé Lombardi,** organizer of the New Univ. for the Third Age; **André Lwolf,** Nobel Laureate in Physiology and professor of science, Collège de France; **Paul MacCready,** Kremer Prize winner for aeronautical achievements; **John Passmore,** professor of philosophy, Australian National Univ.; **Jean-Claude Pecker,** professor of astrophysics, Collège de France, Académie des Sciences; **Wardell Baxter Pomeroy,** psychotherapist and author; **Sir Karl Popper,** professor emeritus of logic and scientific method, Univ. of London; **W. V. Quine,** professor of philosophy, Harvard; **Max Rood,** professor of law and former Minister of Justice in Holland; **Carl Sagan,** astronomer, Cornell; **Andrei Sakharov,** physicist, Nobel Peace Prize winner; **Svetozar Stojanovic,** professor of philosophy, Univ. of Belgrade; **Thomas Szasz,** professor of psychiatry, SUNY Medical School; **V. M. Tarkunde,** chairman, Indian Radical Humanist Association; **Richard Taylor,** professor of philosophy, Union College; **Alberto Hidalgo Tuñón,** president of the Sociedad Asturiana de Filosofía, Oviedo, Spain; **G. A. Wells,** professor of German, Univ. of London; **Edward O. Wilson,** professor of sociobiology, Harvard; **Lady Barbara Wootton,** former Deputy Speaker, House of Lords. Deceased: **George O. Abell, Lawrence Kohlberg, Ernest Nagel, George Olincy, Chaim Perelman.**

Secretariat: **Vern Bullough,** dean of natural and social sciences, SUNY College at Buffalo; **Antony Flew,** professor emeritus of philosophy, Reading Univ.; **Sidney Hook,** professor emeritus of philosophy, New York Univ.; **Paul Kurtz,** professor of philosophy, SUNY at Buffalo, editor of FREE INQUIRY; **Gerald Larue,** professor emeritus of archaeology and biblical studies, Univ. of Southern California at Los Angeles. *Executive Director:* **Steven L. Mitchell.**

Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER)

The Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion was developed to examine the claims of Eastern and Western religions and of well-established and newer sects and denominations in the light of scientific inquiry. The Committee is interdisciplinary, including specialists in biblical scholarship, archaeology, linguistics, anthropology, the social sciences, and philosophy who represent differing secular and religious traditions. Committee members are dedicated to impartial scholarship and the use of objective methods of inquiry.

Gerald Larue (Chairman), USC at Los Angeles; **John Allegro,** former lecturer in Near Eastern and Old Testament Studies, Univ. of Manchester (England); **Robert S. Alley,** professor of humanities, Univ. of Richmond; **Michael Arnheim,** professor of ancient history, Univ. of Witwatersrand (South Africa); **Joseph Barnhart,** professor of philosophy, North Texas State Univ.; **Paul Beattie,** president, Fellowship of Religious Humanists; **H. James Birx,** chairman of Anthropology/Sociology Department, Canisius College; **Vern Bullough,** SUNY College at Buffalo; **Joseph Fletcher,** Univ. of Virginia Medical School; **Antony Flew,** Reading Univ. (England); **Van Harvey,** professor of religion, Stanford; **Sidney Hook,** New York Univ.; **Paul Kurtz,** SUNY at Buffalo; **William V. Mayer,** director, Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, Univ. of Colorado; **Delos McKown,** professor of philosophy, Auburn Univ.; **Lee Nisbet,** associate professor of philosophy, Medaille College; **George Smith,** president, Signature Books; **A. T. Steegman,** professor of anthropology, SUNY at Buffalo; **G. A. Wells,** Univ. of London; **Steven L. Mitchell** (ex officio).

Biblical Criticism Research Project (CSER Subcommittee)

The Biblical Criticism Research Project was founded to help disseminate the results of biblical scholarship—studies in comparative religion, folklore, scientific archaeology, and literary analysis. It investigates the claim that the Bible is divinely inspired; the historical evidence for Jesus and other Bible personalities; the role of religious myth, symbol, and ritual; and the possibility of basing morality upon reason and experience instead of biblical doctrine. The Research Project's goals include compiling bibliographies of the best sources of information about the Bible, publishing articles and monographs about different facets of biblical research, and convening seminars and conferences.

R. Joseph Hoffmann (Chairman), professor of philosophy and religion, Hartwick College; **David Noel Freedman,** professor of Old Testament, Univ. of Michigan; **Randel Helms,** professor of English, Arizona State Univ.; **Robert Joly,** professor of philosophy, Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Etudes Philosophiques de l'Université de Mons (Belgium); **Carol Meyers,** professor of religion, Duke Univ.; **James Robinson,** director, Inst. for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont College; **John F. Priest,** professor and chairman, Dept. of Religion, Florida State Univ.; **Morton Smith,** professor of history, Columbia.

Faith-Healing Investigation Project (CSER Subcommittee)

David Alexander, special investigator; **Robert S. Alley,** Univ. of Richmond; **Luis W. Alvarez,** professor emeritus of physics, Univ. of California; **Stephen Barrett, M.D.,** consumer health advocate; **Bonnie Bullough,** SUNY at Buffalo; **Shawn Carlson,** Lawrence Berkeley Labs; **Joseph Fletcher,** Univ. of Virginia Medical School; **William Jarvis,** chairman, Dept. of Public Health Science, Loma Linda Univ., California; **Richard H. Lange, M.D.,** chief of nuclear medicine, Ellis Hospital, Schenectady, N.Y.; **Gary Posner, M.D.,** St. Petersburg, Florida; **Wallace I. Sampson, M.D.,** Stanford; **Robert Steiner,** chairman, Occult Committee, Society of American Magicians; **Rita Swan,** President, Children's Health Care Is a Legal Duty, Sioux City, Iowa.

Coordinating Council: **Joseph Barnhart, Paul Kurtz, Gerald Larue,** and **James Randi,** conjurer and principal investigator of the Project.

The Affirmations of Humanism: A Statement of Principles and Values

- We are committed to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems.
- We deplore efforts to denigrate human intelligence, to seek to explain the world in supernatural terms, and to look outside nature for salvation.
- We believe that scientific discovery and technology can contribute to the betterment of human life.
- We believe in an open and pluralistic society and that democracy is the best guarantee of protecting human rights from authoritarian elites and repressive majorities.
- We are committed to the principle of the separation of church and state.
- We cultivate the arts of negotiation and compromise as a means of resolving differences and achieving mutual understanding.
- We are concerned with securing justice and fairness in society and with eliminating discrimination and intolerance.
- We believe in supporting the disadvantaged and the handicapped so that they will be able to help themselves.
- We attempt to transcend divisive parochial loyalties based on race, religion, nationality, creed, class, or ethnicity, and strive to work together for the common good of humanity.
- We want to protect and enhance the earth, to preserve it for future generations, and to avoid inflicting needless suffering on other species.
- We believe in enjoying life here and now and in developing our creative talents to their fullest.
- We believe in the cultivation of moral excellence.
- We respect the right to privacy. Mature adults should be allowed to fulfill their aspirations, to express their sexual preferences, to exercise reproductive freedom, to have access to comprehensive and informed health-care, and to die with dignity.
- We believe in the common moral decencies: altruism, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, responsibility. Humanist ethics is amenable to critical, rational guidance. There are normative standards that we discover together. Moral principles are tested by their consequences.
- We are deeply concerned with the moral education of our children. We want to nourish reason and compassion.
- We are engaged by the arts no less than by the sciences.
- We are citizens of the universe and are excited by discoveries still to be made in the cosmos.
- We are skeptical of untested claims to knowledge, and we are open to novel ideas and seek new departures in our thinking.
- We affirm humanism as a realistic alternative to theologies of despair and ideologies of violence and as a source of rich personal significance and genuine satisfaction in the service to others.
- We believe in optimism rather than pessimism, hope rather than despair, learning in the place of dogma, truth instead of ignorance, joy rather than guilt or sin, tolerance in the place of fear, love instead of hatred, compassion over selfishness, beauty instead of ugliness, and reason rather than blind faith or irrationality.
- We believe in the fullest realization of the best and noblest that we are capable of as human beings.